

**In and Against the Museum:
The Contested Spaces of
Museum Education for Adults**

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Declaration

I, Sotiria Grek, hereby certify that this doctoral thesis has been composed by me, that it is my own work and that it has not been submitted for any other degree or professional qualification.

Signature

Date

.....15/6/2007.....

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Published material:

- An earlier version of 'Museums and the discourse of social inclusion' (section 6, chapter 2) appeared as 'Museums and the unbearable lightness of inclusion', in A. Antikainen, P. Harinen and C. A. Torres (eds) (2006) *In from the Margins: Adult education, work and civil society*, Rotterdam, Taipei: Sense Publishers, pp. 253-264.
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'In and Against the Museum: The Contested Spaces for Museum Education for Adults'

Abstract

This thesis focuses on museum and gallery education for adults in Dundee, Scotland. Through the comparative examination of four museums and galleries in the city, it explores their educational provision, values and curricula. Crucially, the study examines visitors' and non-visitors' views on education in museums; it shows how museum education could radically change when ordinary people are allowed to participate in the conversations about it.

The theoretical framework for the study develops from a synthesis of selected aspects of relevant writings of Antonio Gramsci, Pierre Bourdieu, Jürgen Habermas and Raymond Williams. It critically reviews mainstream literature on museum education, with a view to address issues such as culture and power, currently largely ignored by the established museum education theory.

A multiple case study design is followed, applying a mixed methods approach, which includes a questionnaire survey, field observations, documentation and exhibition analysis and interviews. The study gives rise to findings that, despite local particularities, museum and gallery education in Dundee largely corresponds to the broader national and international developments in the museum sector. Similarly to elsewhere in the UK, museums in Dundee have been increasingly expected to marry commercial approaches with education, contribute to social inclusion, and preserve important aspects of the past. The study shows the democratizing potential of the post-modern museum to address and engage with the citizenry in ways that museums and people, at least in Dundee, had not seen before. However, it also reveals that dominant trends have often had unintended outcomes which, rather than reject, re-invent the old hierarchies of taste and distinction in the museum. This study reveals that education and marketing are now closely interlinked in museum work. The prevalence of individual and self-directed learning over more collective and dialogic forms of education is evident in all museums and galleries explored. Nevertheless, there is also substantial evidence of resistance, stemming from both museum professionals and (non-)visitors. This study explores the contextual conditions and structural realities that determine the ways residual and dominant exhibition narratives are received, resisted and often subverted by museum visitors and staff alike.

The thesis supports that the post-modern museum has created the unique opportunity to now find *within* the museum walls invaluable artefacts and histories from the past to fight *against* the institutionalised legitimacy of old hierarchies and the new hegemonic trends of the marketization and individualisation of education in museums. Finally, it draws on the results of the empirical investigation and a number of theoretical contributors, in order to suggest a framework for the development of further research and exploration of counter-narratives and alternative possibilities for museum education.

Chapter 1

Introduction

'How would you like it if we tried to compose a history?'

'I would like nothing better. But which?'

'Indeed, which?'

Gustave Flaubert (1976) *Bouvard and Pécuchet*¹

Interestingly, museums and galleries² have often been likened to a clock: even though buildings and exhibitions have retained their relatively stable and unchanging face, hidden mechanisms and the interplay of a range of curators, educators, trustees, donors, artists and architects, determine their profiles and ideological orientations (Schubert, 2000). This study arose out of a more recent development that has been affecting the cogs' works: the re-discovery of the 'audience'. Indeed, due to a number of demographic and cultural trends in post-industrial and post-modern society, museums and galleries have arguably been changing from relatively elitist into more audience-driven and service-oriented organisations. Amongst an array of transformations and new orientations that they have seen, their educational role has been receiving increased interest and acknowledgement.

This study set out to explore the reasons for, workings and impact of this change by examining the field of museum and gallery education for adults in the UK. This is a relatively under-researched topic within museum education studies —academic and other literature has focused more on children's learning in the museum. The emphasis has increasingly been on how people learn in the museum and the ways their learning can be improved. This study set out to move the research lens from examining *learning* in the museum as a *process*, into investigating museum *education* as the broader notion which involves, alongside learning, critical questions in regard to its *content* and the *conditions* under which it takes place.

¹ Quoted in Schubert (2000; backcover).

² The term 'gallery' will be used from here on to refer to both art galleries and contemporary art centres.

Arguably, the post-modern museum has brought people closer to exhibitions than ever before; more and more visitors (and some 'non-visitors') now engage with museum displays in much more participatory ways. Nevertheless, as Flaubert might have asked, which history is selected for them to engage with? If museums have become more open and accessible to broader social groups, have they become more democratic in terms of a more collective and shared construction of history and culture?

Class analysis, despite its decreased status in contemporary social science (Wright, 2005), was considered as the most fruitful theoretical backdrop for the interpretation of issues such as the relation of culture with power and the unequal structural conditions affecting people's engagement with it. As a background to this, it was the theoretical contributions of Gramsci, Williams, Bourdieu and Habermas that shaped my thinking about the focus of this study and assisted me in finding the appropriate research methods to investigate it.

In relation to context, the study is set in a fairly small urban centre on the east coast of Scotland, the city of Dundee. Dundee was chosen as a prime example of a formerly industrial city, which has experienced the waves of modernisation and regeneration of the post-industrial economy. In particular, the study examines the educational provision of four museums and galleries in the city, namely the McManus Galleries and Museum, Dundee Contemporary Arts, the Discovery Point Antarctic Museum and Verdant Works.

a. Museums and the people: A brief history

Even though museums and galleries have traditionally been considered as stable and unchanging institutions, crises and contradictions have shaped their history. Their capacity to adapt to ever-changing historical and political conditions can be traced back to the foundation of the first museums and galleries of the modern era in Europe, all the way to the present day (Schubert, 2000).

The discovery of the 'audience' is not a new development; in the European context, it first appeared with the foundation of the British Museum (1759) in London and the Louvre (1793) in Paris. However, despite the British Museum's declared public mission, it was mostly the domain of learned gentlemen; 'access was governed by the rules of court protocol and aristocratic

etiquette' (Schubert, 2000; 17). It was only well after the turn of the eighteenth century that the British Museum would cease to be perceived as an end in itself and as a means of educating the public. Similarly, Jacques-Louis David (1748-1825), the famous neo-classicist painter of the French Revolution, suggested for the Louvre: 'The museum is not supposed to be a vain assemblage of frivolous luxury objects that serve only to satisfy idle curiosity. What it must be is an imposing school' (quoted in McLellan, 1994; 108). Education and enlightenment were not to be limited to the few aristocrats; instead, museums were intended for the public and its education. Nevertheless, when the Louvre first opened its doors to the public and despite the rhetoric, the displays were looking suspiciously similar to the old 'cabinets of curiosities'³. Financial and space constraints, as well as ideological conflicts amongst the revolutionaries, meant that 'from the outset the museum and its critique went hand in hand' (Schubert, 2000; 19).

Order, instruction and classification were the newly-introduced concepts for the public museum of the nineteenth century, which, according to the cultural needs of the emerging new bourgeois class, had replaced the old norms of exclusion, the royal and aristocratic protocol, with a new one: knowledge (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992). Both the Louvre and the British Museum were to be transformed into spaces of mass education. But what sort of education? Both institutions, through their extensive collections of artefacts and artworks from all over the world, were to become the physical and symbolic representation of the two nations' imperialistic and colonial glory (Caygill, 1981; France, 1991). No discussion regarding the objectivity or ideological orientation of public museums at such a young age of the institution was to be held: as always, social and historical conditions were influencing the shape of the new institution, which was being used for propagandistic reasons, as much as it was used for educational ones.

Within the UK context in particular, accessibility to the public in museums varied a lot before 1845, the year of the 'Libraries, Museums and Gymnasiums Act'. Up until then, the number of museums was limited to around forty. The Act gave local authorities the power to establish and maintain museums and galleries, however, by mid-century no more than sixty existed (Chadwick, 1980). Despite the small number of museums and galleries, the second half of the

³ 'Cabinets of curiosities' were widespread in Europe at the end of the 16th and in the 17th century. The archetypal 'cabinet of curiosity' was a disordered assemblage of unconnected natural objects, pictures and small art works, well-known for its unsystematic and idiosyncratic composition. Famous 'cabinets' were the German *Wunderkammer*, the *Kunstammer*, and the Italian *studiolo*, *studio*, *guardaroba*, and the slightly later *galleria* (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992).

nineteenth century was a time of flourishing of the arts, with the advent of the Arts and Crafts movement and its first exhibition at the New Gallery in London in 1888. The exhibition presented works by William Morris, William de Morgan, Walter Crane and Edward Burne-Jones (Tinniswood, 1999). The movement was rooted in the reaction of its members against what the 'Great Exhibition of the Works of Industry of All Nations' in 1851 at the Crystal Palace in London represented. On the one hand, exhibits were presented as the pinnacle of human civilisation. On the other, for the members of the movement, the exhibition showed some of the worst consequences of industrialisation. According to William Morris (1834-1896), the father of Arts and Crafts together with John Ruskin (1819-1900), it was high time people opposed the new realities of industrialisation and returned to pre-industrial values. Nevertheless, the movement's moral crusade was doomed to failure; the clock could not turn back and, even though aiming to serve the poor working classes, Arts and Crafts design could only be afforded by the rich (Tinniswood, 1999).

Finally, at the turn of the century, two major museums were established; the Victoria and Albert and the Science Museum opened in 1899, having developed out of the older South Kensington Museum (originally established in 1857) (Chadwick, 1980).

During the twentieth century, the two World Wars initiated an era of relative instability for UK museums. Even though some of them offered educational opportunities at times when there was no school provision, by the late 1940s many of them were hit by the scarcity of means that resulted from the Second World War (Schubert, 2000). On the contrary, the post-war period was more or less stable for most museums in the country, with education being largely in the shadow of other museum functions, such as conservation or curatorship (Schubert, 2000).

It was not until the 1980s, when a number of museums and galleries, with some of the most prominent institutions included, were faced with financial insecurity and the need to change. The Victoria and Albert Museum in London was, for example, one of the most high-profile UK museums to have dire financial problems, with the threat of bankruptcy being close. Indeed, the Thatcher government (from 1979) was one of the first governments in Europe to reject the 'culture of dependency' and question museums' entitlement to be solely funded by the state. This marked a new era for the museum world and —I would suggest— for its relations with the public. From now on, apart from the state support, museums and galleries had to also find

additional means of financing themselves. The new reality was accompanied by increasing demands for accountability and justification of museums' public worth. Sponsorship did assist the finances of some museums, nevertheless in years of recession —when this support was most in need— it disappeared. Visitors started to matter more and more in museums, since higher numbers would ensure some kind of economic security, especially through the revenue that museums shops, cafes and venue-hire started to generate (Schubert, 2000).

b. Museums and the people: the present

Since the 1990s there has also been strong pressure not just on museums and galleries, but on cultural organisations in general, to secure their finances by adhering to national policy agendas on lifelong learning, social inclusion, participation and access. In addition, specifically in relation to museums and galleries, learning has been seen as a major priority in their offer to the public. This indeed was a significant change in the museum tradition, which, after the end of the nineteenth century, saw the emergence of looking at museums from a more aesthetic perspective, sometimes at the expense of museums' educational and political role that, as we saw, they had initially acquired (Duncan, 1995). The 'aesthetic' museum would see exhibitions as spaces of the sublime appreciation of the 'higher' expressions of the human civilisation; this is the logic of the masterpiece, still dominant in many museums around the globe.

Despite the move from the more aesthetic discourses to an emphasis on the museum as a learning organisation, the contradictions accompanying this trend —which are often to be located even within a single institution, as we shall see— reveal museums as spaces for the contestation of a diversity of perspectives. In regard to their role in learning and education in particular, which is the main topic of this study, more recent trends like a focus on processes, accountability and evaluation have marked a new type of education in the museum, one which should be constantly measured, if museums are to justify their public mission and the state funding that comes with it.

Further, having been criticised for their narrowly individualistic, instrumental and reductionist character (Martin, 2001; 2003; Crowther, 2004; Olssen, 2006; Coffield, 2002; Griffin, 1999; 1999b; Edwards, 1995; Levitas, 1998; Tett, 2002; Field, 2000), lifelong learning and social inclusion did however renew visitors' interest in museums and galleries. Redundant exhibitions,

old buildings, few organised educational activities and the curatorial pre-occupation with research rather than people, all used to reinforce the common perception of museums being 'boring', 'old' and 'stuffy' places. The primacy of the market ideology and the harsh reality of competition led most museums to urgent face-lifts; those museums not able to afford them had to close (Lawley, 2003). The rest, adapting to the new reality, strove to become more welcoming and visitor-friendly. In addition, previously limited academic interest in the area was overtaken by a number of museum studies departments being opened across the country, preparing students to become museum 'professionals': management, marketing and 'audience development' were now seen as more promising careers in the museum sector, compared to –the old-fashioned– conservation and curatorship.

'Standstill' revenue budgets or even reductions, decreased staff numbers⁴ and an encouragement for museums to become part of the 'bidding' culture, worsened the position of most museums and their staff (Lawley, 2003). From now on, 'business-like' management techniques, strategic planning and performance indicators would direct museum work, including education. The latter took different names: the word education was associated with formal provision and hence was to be avoided. Learning, interpretation, or 'meaning-making' became widely and interchangeably used as more relevant to the new image of museums. The 'modernising' government agenda, and especially local authority restructuring, the Best Value⁵ scheme and social inclusion (Lawley, 2003) affected museums across the UK. However, despite the emphasis on their role for personal fulfilment and social cohesion:

Few would deny their long-term value to society and the necessity of their long-term existence. But most of them are very dependent on public funding and in the short-term world of politics and social priorities are not seen to be very important (Davies, 1994: 81).

The Road to Wigan Pier (Audit Commission, 1991) gave a clear mandate to local authority museums and galleries in England and Wales: 'Services provided should be targeted to chosen customers'. Although Scotland has traditionally been more resistant to such approaches, performance indicators were set for Scottish museums as well: numbers of visits and cost per visit/usage, in addition with the adoption of government and national initiatives, like the

⁴ In Glasgow, one hundred posts in the museum service were lost between 1996-1999 (Lawley, 2003).

⁵ The Best Value scheme involves assessment of a service against four criteria; namely Challenge, Compare, Consult and Compete (Lawley, 2003).

information technology agenda, lifelong learning and social inclusion, all became the markers of success for museums and galleries in the newly-devolved country. Even though most museums' education and community programming predate New Labour's policies, those activities now had to come under a different name and be accounted for. Nonetheless, criteria were vague, funding was under pressure and staff morale was constantly decreasing (Lawley, 2003).

c. A sense of the argument: research questions and structure of the thesis

The previous section was an attempt to draw a sketchy picture of the broad historical context in which this study was conceptualised and undertaken. Influences of the dominant trends I have identified are also to be found at a local level; indeed, a revitalised interest in culture and education has been the driving force behind the construction of Dundee's new image. My intention is to test the relevance and effects of these trends in the field of museum and gallery education for adults in the context of this city. The opening of new museums and galleries and the revamping of the old ones was considered as the optimum timing in order to de-construct, analyse and re-synthesize the mechanisms that 'move' the clock's hands in the museums and galleries of this medium-sized urban centre.

Because of the increased emphasis on education and learning in museums, this study does not examine museum and gallery education as reduced merely to organised educational sessions, tours and lectures for the public. Instead, according to the International Council of Museums (ICOM), it sees museum education as encompassing a wide range of museum functions, if not all of them:

The museum should take every opportunity to develop its role as an educational resource used by all sections of the population...The museum has an important duty to attract new and wider audiences within all levels of the community, locality or group that the museum aims to serve, and should offer both the general community and specific individuals and groups within it opportunities to become actively involved in the museum and to support its aims and policies (ICOM, 1990: 26).

The Scottish Museum Council, on the other hand, gives a more detailed definition in regard to community education in museums and galleries, signalling the new trends that are examined in this study:

Community learning in museums has replaced the term community education. It refers to informal learning and social development work with individuals and groups, aiming to enhance confidence, knowledge, skills, organisational ability and resources to tackle real life personal, social and economic issues. The heritage sector is a strategic partner in community learning and development planning and an active partner in their delivery (SMC, online, 2006).

Therefore, the questions this research addresses form distinct, whilst interconnecting, categories. The first is related directly to the adult education provision in the museums under consideration; the second refers to the museums' relation with the public, or how their visitors and 'non-visitors' perceive and use museums and their educational potential. Both categories consist of a broader comparative analysis of the educational opportunities offered in museums and galleries in Dundee and the views of the local citizenry on their educational role. In other words,

1. What are the adult education opportunities in the museums under consideration? What are the values underlying them? What sorts of curricula determine the content and pedagogical practices employed?
2. What is the impact of this provision and what are the reactions of the local population to it? What and how do adults learn in the museum? Which factors influence their educational experiences in museums? What are their views on the educational role of the museum? Finally, are there any alternative possibilities for adult education in museums and what are they?

In particular, this study examines how education in museums could radically change when ordinary people are allowed to participate in the conversations about it. Therefore, as will be shown later, the participants in this research are not merely parts of discourses, quoted in order to justify the theoretical framework of the study or validate its findings. They are real people with real problems and opinions, who daily experience the effects of their social positions in spite of the ways these positions are conceptually represented —if at all. Hence, the notion of class occupies a central place in this study, regardless of its depreciation by the dominant museum education discourses. Participants from the field were active in producing new ways of thinking about museum education, ways that, as Williams (2001) famously argued, start from where the people are, rather than from the institutions.

In a way, this study is an attempt to show how museum education policies and practices are being constituted and re-constituted in the light of the struggle of the multiple understandings about education and learning in the broader cultural field. Its originality lies in the fact that it examines a specific locality, the city of Dundee, and attempts to cast light on the educational interactions and exchanges amongst the city's four main museums and galleries and the local population. In order to best work with, conceptualise and analyse the contradictions and conflicts that arose from this contested field, I am adopting an old argument, the 'in and against the state' argument, first used by the London Edinburgh Weekend Return Group (1979). According to it, 'resources we need involve us in relations we don't' (1979; 3). I am going to show how the new post-modern discourses around the significance of the educational role of the museum, despite having often disregarded the relation of culture and power in an unequal society, have indeed opened up the path for alternative ways of theorising and practicing museum education. The argument of working 'in and against' museums is about using the present climate to foster for museum education some degree of space for oppositional voices and practices—it is such voices and practices that this study attempts to reveal.

The first part of the thesis examines the literature, theory and methods which informed the research. Chapter two attempts to contextualise the study within the academic and policy work that has informed it and museum education in general. The literature review deals with the UK context, even though literature from other countries has also been included when it has been influential for museum education theory and practice in the UK.

Chapter three examines the theoretical framework of the study; the works of Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams, Pierre Bourdieu and Jürgen Habermas informed the research questions, the methodology and fieldwork. In contrast to dominant discourses which focus on learning theory rather than education, I am using the work of theorists who have shed light on the issues of culture and power and have questioned the legitimacy of social and cultural distinction and the reproduction of inequality. The more general theoretical framework of this study is constructed around Gramsci's notion of hegemony, the ethical state and the organic intellectuals. Raymond Williams's work has been particularly useful in examining some of Gramsci's views through a more contemporary lens and within the field of cultural studies. Further, the work of Pierre Bourdieu and his colleagues, even though largely ignored by current museum theory, is analysed as one of the most relevant and applicable to understanding contemporary trends in the museum

world. Jürgen Habermas and his idea about 'the colonisation of the lifeworld' have explained some of the more recent orientations museum education theory and practice have been taking. Finally, the Habermasian 'depth hermeneutics' offers the theoretical frame of furthering interpretation towards a project of museum education which is critical and questioning of the status quo; it also offers a bridge to chapter four on the research methodology.

The methodology chapter examines the mixed methods approach that was followed for the fieldwork. Quantitative and qualitative tools were used in order to examine the participation trends in the museums under investigation, as well as research the views of the public regarding the educational programming of the museums in their city. Descriptive statistics gave an overall picture of the identity of the visitors of the institutions under investigation. This allowed a comparative analysis of the kinds of people that visit the museums in Dundee, as well as revealing which social groups are largely distant and excluded from them. It also informed the conduct of the qualitative strand of the study, which used critical ethnography and critical discourse analysis tools to examine both the educational provision of the organisations under question and its take-up by and impact on the local population.

I move on to examine the research fieldwork and findings and their analysis. Chapter five focuses on a discussion of the case studies under consideration, in an attempt to give an in-depth analysis of the museums, their exhibitions, visitor profiles and staff perceptions on their educational role. The chapter concludes with a comparative overview of the case studies and attempts to create a picture of the field of museums and galleries in Dundee and their educational opportunities for adults. Chapter six discusses the main findings of the interviews conducted with visitors and 'non-visitors'; it presents the research participants' views on the educational role of the museums and galleries of their city and highlights the alternative possibilities that their accounts often offered.

The next chapter (chapter seven) focuses on a more in-depth analysis of the research findings. Drawing on the theoretical frame that guided the study, I will show how the pre-dominance of learning over education in museums and galleries is often a limited and limiting way of engaging with people, one that, although striving to be inclusive, reproduces relations of inequality and power structures in museums.

Finally, the last chapter of the thesis focuses on the conclusions of the study and some discussion about the possibilities the post-modern museum has opened up for using the valuable cultural resources/ artefacts of the past *in* the museum to fight *against* the limitations of the 'selective tradition' (Williams, 1973) and the hegemony of individualisation and de-politicisation of cultural politics. Based on the contributions of the research participants, the thesis concludes with some new propositions for further research and analysis.

Chapter 2

Museum education for adults: an overview of the literature

This chapter discusses the main analytical traditions around education and learning in the museum sphere from the beginning of the twentieth century until today. From the first few reports that recommended the use of museums for educational purposes, to the more contemporary and sophisticated analyses of adult learning in the exhibition space, the literature on museum education for adults has come a long way. Further, education in museums is first and foremost dependent on the degree of participation in museum visiting; research which explores the determinants of visiting trends, particularly in relation to art gallery visiting, is therefore examined. Adult education in museums has also been closely related to social ‘agendas’, like social inclusion—an attempt will be made to locate and exemplify the discourse that has developed around the ‘inclusive’ museum, when this signals significant trends in the ways educational work with adults is conducted.

As will be shown, the review of the relevant literature reveals dominant tendencies, but also some ‘messiness’ and few alternative views on the educational potential of museums. Nonetheless, whilst there has been an emerging area of research on learning (rather than education) in museums and galleries, issues such as culture, power and the reproduction of inequality have remained—with few exceptions—untouched.

Finally, the focus of this literature review will be the United Kingdom; examples from theoretical work, research studies or policy texts from other countries will only be examined if they have explicitly influenced museum education practice in the British context. The Scottish case will be investigated in more detail, but as part of the wider UK context.

1. Constructing and interpreting: learning or the art of ‘meaning-making’ in museums

a. Adult education and the museum: the first steps

Even though a history of museum education in the UK is yet to be written, the contested nature of museums and galleries as educational institutions is easily to be traced back to the early twentieth century.

Starting in 1919, the Commission on Adult Education proposed the inclusion of museums and galleries in all educational schemes for local development. However, the Museums Association⁶ was opposed to the transfer of educational work to local authorities and stated that the purpose of museums was *not* to offer educational services (Chadwick, 1980). Miers, in his major *Report on the Public Museums of the British Isles* (1928), also reported on the lack of coordination between museums and galleries and local educational authorities: ‘To put it bluntly, most people in this country do not really care for museums or believe in them; they have not hitherto played a sufficiently important part in the life of the community to make ordinary folk realise what they can do’ (Miers quoted in Chadwick, 1990; 13). Few years later, in 1938, Markham, in another detailed report of public museums in the UK, noted that the educational function of museums had to be developed further and that local authorities should be in charge of it (Chadwick, 1980).

In general, in the first half of the twentieth century efforts were generally concentrated on linking museums and their educational role with local communities. A more devolved organisation of museum work was often proposed in addition to promoting museum exhibitions that would be of greater relevance to people’s everyday lives. Nevertheless, resistance to change would come both from the Museums Association and from museum curators, who were finding that the purpose of museums was different from schools or other educational institutions.

⁶ The Museums Association (MA) is the oldest organisation of its kind in the world. It was set up in 1889 by a small number of museums and galleries and continues its work in the museum and gallery sector until today. It is still independent from government and has approximately 5000 individual members, 600 institutional members and 250 corporate members. Its influence and impact on policy, funding and professional development has been major throughout the history of museums and galleries in the UK (MA, online, 2007).

During the post war period new theories and methods of museum learning were explored; however, education officers were concerned with the promotion of children's, rather than adults', education in the museum (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991). Interest for adult education in museums and galleries would often come from outside the institutions: in 1956, a working party appointed by the National Institute of Adult Education reported on museums and their links with adult education (NIAE, 1956). The report suggested that the main obstacle towards offering adult educational opportunities in museums was elitism, since linking museums with adult education had been 'traditionally resisted by spokesmen (*sic*) from the museum profession' (NIAE, 1956; 50). The report noted other issues as well, such as the lack of facilities, flexible opening hours, handling of museum objects and staff expertise. Finally, the report concluded that the general attitude of museum staff towards promoting museums and galleries as centres of community educational activity was primarily negative.

The picture began to change during the 1960s. In 1963 the Rosse Report drew attention to the need for organising educational services in a more systematic way through the appointment of specialised staff. It did not follow the more general approach of a broad educational remit for museums; rather, it differentiated curatorial from educational work, creating a new management structure for museums (Rosse, 1963). Since museum educators acquired a more specific job remit, special groups for their professional support were formed; the 'Group for Educational Services in Museums' (GESM), later renamed to 'Group for Education in Museums' (GEM), was established in 1963 and continues its work until the present day. During the same period, the first book on learning methods for museums was published by the Museums Association, providing guidance to education officers, administrative staff in local authorities and teachers (Cheetham, 1967).

In 1963 the Standing Commission on Museums and Galleries published the results of a survey in provincial museums (Chadwick, 1980). Amongst its recommendations were the establishment of loan services in local communities and the promotion of education in the work of Area Museum Councils. It seems that the survey had an impact on the Museums Association committee, since in their 1970 annual conference, the potential use of museums for all ages and across the range of formal and informal education was discussed. In fact, the conference intended a new beginning for the relations of the museum profession with adult educators, since discussions

‘implied thinking ahead rather than re-hashing existing thought and current practice’ (Museums Association quoted in Chadwick, 1980). The Wright Report (1971) offered an interesting job description for the education officer, quite remarkable in its scope for such an early stage of establishing the profession: namely, museum educators had to supervise the loan service; organise and give lectures; work together with other staff on display and publications; arrange group visits; and liaise with other educational institutions.

The 1970s was also a turning point for Scottish museums, with a proposal for the foundation of ‘Museum Educational Centres’ (Chadwick, 1980). Adamson, in his 1971 report, recommended the establishment of arts centres in the communities, which would incorporate museums, libraries, theatres and concert halls in order to provide,

...many ancillary public services, such as loan exhibitions, picture loan schemes, lectures, a schools and youth-club service, the running of debating societies, playreading groups, art and handicraft displays —and even the provision of a Citizen’s Advice Bureau...above all, they make the arts agreeable, creating a congenial environment in which people can meet to enjoy music, drama, paintings, manuscripts, books, sculpture —or simply, perhaps, each other’s company (1971; 39).

This innovative, people-centred, thinking about museums and adult education was in many ways parallel to the ‘cultural struggle’ (Steele, 1995) in the post World War Two period, when many radical adult educators felt that there was a need to turn from a politics of production to issues of representation, ideology and hegemony. The focus on the ways art and literature could foster democratic participation and the overcoming of hegemonic interpretations of culture became the roots of the foundation of British Cultural Studies and in particular of the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (Steele, 1995). However, according to Steele, ‘the centre of gravity shifted away from adult education to departments of English studies and Left political journals....it developed into a new mainstream academic discipline with quite a fierce body of methodologies and increasingly arcane internal debates over ‘Theory’ (Steele, 1995; 47-48). Raymond Williams (1921-1988), one of the founding fathers of British Cultural Studies, was critical of this distancing from the ad hoc, extra-mural practice with the communities that sparked off their foundation in the first place.

In retrospect, it could be maintained that at the time when museums and galleries were as close as they had ever been to adult education, the focus of the latter gradually shifted from radical

practice in the community towards more academic and theoretical concerns. The present study attempts to revive the dialogue between radical adult education and museums, a dialogue that was interrupted —if it ever really started in the first place— in the 1970s. In the meantime, as the next sections will show, the theoretical sources that fed museum education came from a whole new and different disciplinary area: learning theory.

b. Learning theories and the museum: the past

Since the 1980s, the systematic development of museum education in the UK has been on the basis of major schools of learning theory, like behaviourism, developmental psychology and constructivism. In fact, questions arise about the very term ‘museum education’, since most of the literature focuses explicitly on learning rather than education (Dierking, 1991). Nonetheless, confusion is also to be found even in regard to what ‘learning’ itself is. Falk and Dierking, in an attempt to define museum learning, suggest:

The word ‘learning’ comes with a great deal of baggage; some of it is useful, much of it not. Despite a great deal of research and theorizing about learning, science has yet to devise a consistent, functional description of what learning is and how it functions (2000; 215).

They continue:

For purposes of evaluating learning in the museum setting, we need a broad definition of the term, encompassing the richness of experience occurring within museums and emphasising long-lasting memories and relationships. We need to develop a comprehensive museum-centered model that embraces certain elements of mainstream learning theories, but that prescribes a much stronger role for the variables of motivation, beliefs, and attitudes of the personal context and for the influences of social and physical contexts (2000; 216).

Indeed, early theories of learning about the development of cognitive knowledge, often tested in laboratory controlled conditions, were soon to be found inappropriate for the field of museum education (Falk and Dierking, 2000). At least up to the 1980s, learning theories influencing museum work were based on the experiences of museum educators who were ex-teachers (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991). They would use museum exhibits as tools for a different kind of children’s learning. Manuals of good practice give examples of the work of the famous first museum educators like Sam Thompson, for example, and her contribution to the Glasgow Art Gallery and Museum. Thompson rejected the idea of the museum tour; a room of the museum

was transformed into a classroom with borrowed chairs, ethnographic material and even a projection booth (Hooper-Greenhill, 1991).

However, it was in behaviourism that some of the first UK museum educators found an analytical tool, which assisted them interpret learning in the museum according to behavioural changes as a result of practice or experience (Bitgood et al., 1986). Bandura's theory of social learning (Bandura and Walters, 1963) as the product of the imitation of a model, had some followers at the early steps of museum education (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994) but later on received criticisms, due to its deterministic nature (Dierking, 1992).

Behaviourism supports an associational notion of learning; namely, concepts or facts are grasped after a series of responses to a certain kind of stimulus. Likewise, museum educators applied behaviourism in exhibition design, which, in order to be successful, had to make its messages explicit and attract and keep the visitor's attention to the exhibits (Dierking, 1992).

However, behaviourists themselves struggled with trying to explain more complex types of learning. Research on visitors' perceptions showed that no matter how 'effectively' the exhibition message was put across, individual visitors' own ideas and agendas influenced the way they viewed the exhibition, to the extent that they might have left it with their own interpretations in mind, having ignored the 'intended' message. If a behaviourist approach were applied, it would mean that the failure of the exhibition design to communicate the 'correct' message to its visitors could be interpreted as a failure to achieve any learning at all. Indeed, 'behaviourist theory for the most part does not recognise that there may be many ways to 'know' something and that individual differences strongly influence learning' (Dierking, 1992; 221). The exact timing of the evaluation of the visit's outcome was another issue: does the end of a visit signify the end of learning? Or can visitors work the ideas in their minds, look maybe for more stimuli and hence learn but much later and well after they have left the museum? Therefore, what was otherwise called 'goal-oriented' approach, was very quickly 'left behind in the museum world, since outcomes may be anticipated and possibly expected, but cannot be required' (Hooper-Greenhill, 2002; 7). According to Dierking,

In those early studies there was not a great deal of effort to get inside the head of the visitor. Instead we were concerned with what colour to use, or how large to make the type on the

labels, or how to enhance learning by creating a space that focused attention on an object. Only recently have we thought of the museum experience as encompassing more than the exhibit (1991; 6).

Next, developmental psychology and particularly the work of Jean Piaget (1979) were applied to the analysis of the nature of learning in museum. Some museum educators were starting to realise that they could not demand high levels of cognitive attainment, nor could they strictly adhere to outcomes in a learning space so different from the more formal and structured educational provision (Miles et al., 1982; Munley, 1986). Developmental psychology gave the basis of examining the environmental influences in a new, interactionist framework, in which the learner understands the world through direct experience and activity.

It is in developmental psychology that we can first trace the origins of 'hands-on' or 'discovery' learning. In terms of learning through 'discovery' in museums, Bruner's theoretical framework was used (1960; 1966); according to him, people learn not only through actions, but also through mental or symbolic representations, a framework that can easily be applied to art museums or cultural artefacts of religious, spiritual or other ideational form. Black (1990) took Bruner's idea further, by discussing the possibilities for people in museums to 'learn to discover': this was built within a meta-cognitive framework, which distinguishes between more and less experienced learners and seeks to accommodate different levels of the learning experience in the museum. Therefore, people learn through activity, by adapting new and re-constructing their old cognitive schemas (Dierking, 1992).

Nevertheless, criticisms of developmental psychology have focused on its dependence on laboratory experimentation; on the belief that people move through developmental stages in a set pattern; and, finally, on the mathematical and logical reasoning of Piaget's developmental stages, rather than other forms of intellectual development, such as artistic or linguistic (Gardner, 1983).

Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences (1983), after having become very popular in US museum education, was widely referred to in museum education theory in the UK. Gardner (1983) suggested that there are eight forms of human intelligence; namely, the linguistic; the logical-mathematical; the spatial; the musical; the bodily-kinaesthetic; the interpersonal; the intra-personal; and the naturalistic intelligence. People have different kinds of intelligence,

which they can develop accordingly, provided they are given the chance; museums and galleries, as informal educational environments, can offer symbolic systems of cultural reference, where people find learning opportunities defined in broader terms, rather than purely cognitively.

Finally, Vygotsky's 'zone of proximal development' (1978) has also influenced museum education practice, valuing the benefits of social interaction in learning, especially between children and adults in the exhibition space (Black, 1990).

c. Learning theories and the museum: the present

Constructivism and hermeneutics (Hein, 1998; Hooper-Greenhill, 1999; Roberts, 1997; Durbin, 1996; Falk and Dierking, 2000) were applied in museum education, in order to take the work of Piaget and Vygotsky further (Hein, 1991). They represent the two most widely adopted learning theories in museum education today both in the UK and further afield.

Constructivism has been used for the analysis of learning experiences both of school children as well as adults. It is known to have influenced museums in a broader sense, not just having affected their educational practices, but also having changed ideas about exhibition design, marketing, short term project work and long term policy making (Hein, 1995). As will be shown, it was adopted by the Department of Museum Studies in the University of Leicester, the most prestigious school of museology in the UK. The involvement and work of many of its academics with leading museum organisations quickly made constructivism the 'key' theoretical and analytical model for the educational role of the museum. It became very much part of what has since been described as the 'new' museology in the late 1980s (Vergo, 1989) or the 'post-museum' (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; 142). The literature on the 'constructivist' museum (Hein, 1998) is rich; I will not attempt to cover it in its totality. Instead, I will try to give an outline of the theory based on sources representative of the more general trends. Since it has affected project work, research and policy, references to those areas will be made as well.

In his monograph *Learning in the Museum*, Hein (1998) became one of the most well known advocates of what has since been called 'the constructivist museum': 'Constructivism consists of a family of ideas, clustered around a few principles, but no actual exemplar may illustrate all the components' (1998; 155). Some of those components are: connections to the familiar; prior

knowledge, i.e. associations with place, orientation, conceptual access; different learning styles with the application of Gardner's multiple intelligence theory (1991); theatre and drama in museums; other resources, for example computer facilities, open storage areas or even shops; collaborations with other museums or galleries; amount of time spent in the museum; and social interaction. According to Hein, 'visitors make meaning in the museum, they learn by constructing their own understandings...we know that powerful, enriching, even life-changing moments are possible in museums. Visitors do learn in the museum' (1998; 179). For Hein, people construct meaning/ learning individually and socially as they learn. The focus therefore is on the learner; no knowledge is taken for granted, but it is constructed on the basis of the individual's meanings and influences (Hein, 1991). According to him, 'the constructivist museum acknowledges that knowledge is created in the mind of the learner using personal learning methods' (Hein, 1995; 22).

Other museum education theorists (Roberts, 1997; Durbin, 1996; Falk and Dierking, 2000) supported constructivism as well, by emphasising free-choice, constructivist learning as non-linear, personally motivating and involving considerable choice on the part of the learner as to what to learn, as well as where and when to participate in learning. Again, instead of a transmission-absorption model of learning found in the 'traditional' museum, they proposed a contextual one, which involves three overlapping contexts: the personal, the socio-cultural and the physical. Constructivist learning is the process/ product of the interactions between these three contexts.

From Knowledge to Narrative: Educators and the Changing Museum by Roberts (1997) seeks to show that museum education is about empowering meaning through narratives and experience, rather than conveying factual information. Durbin (1996) provides essential guidance for museum educators who participate in exhibition planning. In the same frame of mind, Talboys (1996) gives thorough instructions about the preparatory strategies and the actual empirical experience of the museum visit.

One of the most prominent museum scholars in Britain, who has written extensively on museum education, is Hooper-Greenhill (1989; 1991; 1991b; 1992; 1994; 1994b; 1995; 1997; 1997b; 1999; 2000; 2002). In *The Educational Role of the Museum* (1999), she analyzes the significance of museum learning and stresses the value of new qualitative research on museum audiences. She

explains the process of interpretation based on hermeneutics and the works of Dilthey (1976) and Gadamer (1976), analyzes the communication theories of the transmission and cultural approach, and concludes with Henry Giroux's work on critical pedagogy (1992).

Hooper-Greenhill stresses the need for,

...a move from the laboratory model of research, such as that was used for the early visitor studies, to a more sociological or ethnographic mode, which uses naturalistic settings and a more open-ended research agenda (1999; 11).

Directly connected to constructivism is Hooper-Greenhill's 'hermeneutic circle'⁷, where understanding and meanings are constantly modified (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999). According to her, the process of making sense of experience, of explaining or interpreting the world around us takes place in museums through the encounter with the objects, the material matter displayed (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999). Hooper-Greenhill comments on the process of interpretation in museums; in contrast with any hermeneutic or constructivist approach, museum interpretation means offering visitors 'ready-made' meanings. Exhibition interpretation, for her, takes the form of a scenario; this is the way exhibitions are designed in order to communicate specific messages. She speaks about two types of approaches to the interpretation of objects for museum visitors; the transmission and the cultural approach. In her analysis, whereas the first is set aside because of its passive, 'modernist' character, the second is rooted in hermeneutics and characterises the 'post-museum' (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; 142):

Hermeneutic theory explains that understanding is reached through the process of interpretation. Understanding is a process by which people match what they see and hear with pre-stored groupings of actions that they have already experienced...Gadamer suggests that experiences, objects and other materials such as texts are approached with what he calls prejudices, or foreknowledge, given by our own historicity, and with a certain openness' (Hooper-Greenhill, 2000; 116-117).

In hermeneutic philosophy, the making of meaning is formed by the inevitability of prejudice and tradition, of prior knowledge. Such an approach to knowledge and understanding is close to constructivism; both suggest that learning takes place through the interpretation of the learners' experiences and their participation in the learning process.

⁷ 'Hermeneutic circles, or circles of interpretation: interpretation, the construction of meaning, involves circular and dialogic processes that integrate the whole and the part, and the present and the past' (Hooper Greenhill, 1999; 48).

Both the hermeneutic and the constructivist models of learning in museums have added value to adult education work, by emphasising the multiple, personal and often unpredictable ways that people interpret history, art and science in less structured and formal learning environments, like the museum. Museum educators could from now on base their real-life experiences of how adults learn in the museums on robust academic theory, tested and applied in other, broader and more established contexts of pedagogical practice, like the school or the workplace.

d. Constructing and measuring learning in the museum: the official policy discourse

Many different institutions/organisations carry out research on the educational role of museums and galleries in the UK. Some of them are governmental, such as the Department for Culture, Media and Sport; the Arts and Culture section of the Department of Education in the Scottish Executive; the Economic and Research Council and, more recently, the Arts and Humanities Research Council. There are also independent and semi-independent organisations conducting research, such as the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) and Comedia. Universities, such as the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries at the University of Leicester, have been commissioned by governmental or museum organisations to conduct research in museums. Academic departments have also been supporting doctoral research, which examines different aspects of the museum visit, both educational and other. Most of this research has focused on the education potential of museums for children, school groups and families⁸. Doctoral research on adult education in museums has been limited to the early work of Chadwick (1980) and Merriman (1988).

Further, museums and galleries are increasingly carrying out their own research on their educational programming, alongside professional organisations such as the Museums Association; the Group for Education in Museums; Engage; the Museums and Galleries Commission (until 2000); and Resource, the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council. Other

⁸ See, for example, Carter (2000) for an examination of the Canadian paradigm on museum education; Golding (1997) on expanding museum interpretation for schools; Moussouri (1997) on family learning in the museum; Tseng-Chang (2000) on cross-cultural communication in the museum; Barnea (1989) on the Centre for Museum Education in Haifa; Barnes (2003) on community museums in Mexico; Ross (2003) on a study of visitors in local museums; Mason (2001) on a post-structuralist museology; Yahya (1997) on learning in Indian science museums; and Blud (1988) on social interaction in museum learning for schools.

types of organisations, like the Campaign for Learning through Museums and Galleries, based in London, conducts evaluation of programmes and offers professional advice (Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri, 2001).

The most common type of research is evaluation, often in the form of visitor studies, conducted by museum professionals or contractors. Visitor studies is a hybrid discipline, covering visitor demographics, patterns of visitor behaviours and evaluation methods (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994b). More general research is also pursued, which, most of the times, has a more comparative and holistic perspective, looking across museums and using localised visitor studies. I will attempt to look at examples of both types of research.

A Common Wealth: Museums in the Learning Age (Anderson, 1999), commissioned by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, was one of the most influential recent documents on museum education in the UK. Anderson used two questionnaire surveys and ran colloquia with ten Area Museum Councils in England in order to produce the first ever comprehensive report on museum and gallery education in the UK. The report focused on the current activities of museums as centres for learning and made recommendations for their future development.

Anderson found that the educational provision was a patchwork; lifelong learning in museums was an aspiration rather than reality. For Anderson, achieving a professional standard of educational provision is a challenge that needs to be addressed through a set of recommendations that came with the report, including inclusion of education in the mission statement; widening participation; engaging other educators; adequate provision throughout the UK. According to Anderson,

Museums find their voice through their educational work. They are at the beginning of a process of fundamental change into centres for public learning that could take them, together with other cultural institutions to the centre of public policy (1999; 5).

This focus on public policy was already underway. The former Resource (now the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council) was established in 2000, as a successor to the Museums and Galleries Commission and the Library and Information Commission. Through its web-based material, Resource supports museums as 'agents for changing lives and transforming communities'. It is interesting to examine the language chosen, since museums, as 'springboards

for the knowledge economy', create human and social capital, 'a strategic goal for the creation of supportive networks within the community' (Resource, 2001; no page numbers). In *Using museums, archives and libraries to develop a learning community*, it is recognised that 'education and lifelong learning are increasingly being linked to agendas in other areas—in particular to employment, health, leisure, social inclusion, economic regeneration and neighbourhood renewal' (Resource, 2001; no page numbers). The document states that museums must plan their learning strategies. The word 'education' is being rejected for it 'carries with it connotations of formal, didactic, curriculum-based, teacher-led processes' (Resource, 2001; no page numbers). Therefore, Resource proposes to use the word 'learning', which covers both the formal and the informal museum provision. Resource connects learning with the access agenda in museums and aims at demonstrating the impact they have on 'attainment levels of students in the formal education system, drawing people back into formal learning, developing skills, self-confidence and motivation, the quality of people's lives and their involvement with society' (Resource, 2001; no page numbers).

Resource's *Inspiring Learning for All* (ILFA) is probably one of the most influential recent policy frameworks in museum education. Initially applied in English museums, it has also had a major influence on the Scottish cultural sector. It is a 'learning and access framework' that identified 'the outcomes users might expect from an accessible, inclusive organisation that stimulates and supports learning' (ILFA, online, 2006). The publication focuses on the processes and approaches which need to be in place to achieve this goal, as well as the evidence an organisation would need to collect in order 'to demonstrate its effectiveness in delivering effective learning services' (ILFA, online, 2006). It provides a 'toolkit' for the evaluation of educational processes in museums. According to the framework, there are four key, interlinked aims in museum education: building creative learning partnerships; providing more effective learning opportunities; creating accessible and inspiring learning environments; and, placing learning at the heart of the museums. What is stressed in the report is the need for museums to be informed about 'current and emerging learning and access agendas and ensure these are reflected in planning and activities' (ILFA, online, 2006).

Integral to *Inspiring Learning for All* was the *Learning Impact Research Project* (Hooper-Greenhill, 2002). The aim was to provide a framework for researching and providing evidence on learning in museums, so that the effectiveness of their resources is tested. According to it,

Resource wished to establish a quantitative model for measuring the impact of sessions and workshops in the museum. Hooper-Greenhill (2002) identifies changes in the ways museums see education; these are located within the new socio-cultural and constructivist view of learning, based on an acknowledgement of multiple intelligences and differentiated learning styles, or self-directed learning. The key question here is about the methods of *measuring* this learning, since learning does not entirely focus on increasing cognitive attainment, but could take many other forms. According to the report (Hooper-Greenhill, 2002), the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) (the American counterpart of Resource) has developed similar toolkits for measuring what they call ‘Outcome-based education’ through the application of quantitative methods that can best be described in the following table (IMLS, online, 2006):

Table 1. Outcome-based education in the museum (IMLS, 2006, my emphasis).

Message	Information strategies for understanding <i>museums and library performance</i>
How much we do	Inputs and outputs: statistics, gate counts, web use logs, and other <i>measures of quantity and productivity</i>
How well we do	<i>Customer satisfaction, quality benchmarks, rankings</i>
How much we cost/ what we’re worth	Return on investment and cost: <i>benefit calculations</i>
What good we do/ why we matter	<i>Outcomes measurement, impact assessment</i>

In the *Perspectives on Outcome Based Evaluation for Libraries and Museums* (IMLS, online, 2006b), the authors comment on the increased demands for accountability in the US and the need for ‘performance indicators [to be] stated in objective, quantifiable and measurable terms’ (IMLS, online, 2006b; 2). It is claimed that unless museums and galleries take the responsibility themselves of setting their own success indicators, they are running the risk of external criteria of performance being imposed on them. It is suggested that,

A not-for-profit organisation (social enterprise) and a for-profit business (commercial enterprise) can best be understood as being basically similar organisations.....each employing managerial skills to produce a bottom line result by adding value to the resources which they acquire and possess (IMLS, online, 2006; 7).

Similarly, returning to the *Learning Impact Research Project* (2002), the issue seems to be how to develop a framework of measuring 'learning outcomes' in museums, which can only be expressed through a specific kind of language:

Learning outcomes are expressed in 'can do' verbs: compile, analyse, select, apply, demonstrate, assess, reflect, enumerate, combine, contrast. *'Can do' verbs that are too open to be useful are know, become, aware, appreciate, understand, enjoy, learn.* (Hooper-Greenhill, 2002; 6, my emphasis)

Hooper-Greenhill proposes the term 'generic learning outcomes' for museums, outcomes which are to be measured on the basis of individual accounts of learning susceptible to categorisation. These are: knowledge and understanding; skills; values, attitudes and feelings; creativity, inspiration and enjoyment; and behaviour. In the same spirit, Moussouri (2002) gives a more extended analysis of the 'generic learning outcomes' framework, by emphasising the need for a more standardised approach to the definition and assessment of the educational value of exhibitions, programmes, outreach material and web-based resources.

Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri (2001b; 2001c) have also researched the area of 'meaning-making' in art galleries. In two research projects funded by the West Midlands Regional Museum Council and the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) respectively, they explored the ways in which visitors choose interpretive strategies in order to make the visit meaningful to them (Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri; 2001b; 2001c). According to the summary of the report, class or gender do not determine how adults learn in the exhibition space. In addition, visitors need assistance to enter the museum narratives, especially in order for museums to follow the 'social inclusion agenda':

From the research, it seems clear that, as cultural theorists have suggested in relation to other fields of inquiry, meaning-making strategies cannot be mapped onto socio-economic positions or demographic groupings. *Specific class or gendered positions do not determine how meaning is made*, although level of education did seem to influence the sophistication of the language and concepts visitors were able to use. ...Visitors to WAG [Wolverhampton Art Gallery] were enthusiastic and willing to work hard to understand what they saw. *They wanted to enter, at least to some degree, the interpretive communities represented by WAG*, but they did not possess the skills they needed to grasp the meanings and values of the works of art they encountered.... *Where no special provision is made for visitors unfamiliar with art galleries and their cultural repertoires*, there will be little to attract or engage new audiences, and even existing visitors may feel at a loss to produce meaningful interpretation at times. In addition, *art museums run the risk of being perceived as completely irrelevant in relation to government agendas, especially in relation to the social inclusion agenda* (2001c; iii, my emphasis).

The argument here is not about re-negotiating and democratising exhibitions in museums. Rather, it is about assisting visitors in entering the gallery's 'cultural repertoires' and become part of 'interpretive communities' visitors do not understand and possibly do not associate themselves with.

Following a different line of thinking, the organisation Campaign for Learning in Museums and Galleries (CLMG) seems to adopt a more radical approach to museum learning. In its *Manifesto for Museum Learning* (CLMG, online, 2005), it supports the need for letting the audiences learn by *creating* the museum, as well as being the 'consumers' of its output. In the *Manifesto*, ideas like allowing museums to take risks, be innovative and even fail, democracy and debate in the museum, community collecting, community curating and co-creation of displays, show a broader understanding of what adult education in museums could aspire to.

Finally, the *Collect and Share* project (Collect and Share, online, 2005) was led by Engage, the national association for gallery education, and ran from 2002 until 2005. Its aim was to collect examples of best practice in lifelong learning work with disadvantaged adults in museums and galleries across Europe. The final evaluation report concluded that museums are moving towards a notion of museums as places to perform different educational practices for different audiences. Accordingly, most projects aim to widen physical, intellectual and social access; to make contact with and target people who do not normally go to museums; and provide experiences and ideas other than disciplinary thought and object-based learning. Finally, the report identifies a prevalent trend in museums, where discrepancies have arisen in the relationship between marketing and education: that is, the tensions in museum organisational cultures when they understand visitors as consumers, rather than active citizens (Collect and Share, online, 2005).

e. Constructing and measuring learning in the museum: the Scottish dimension

In Scotland, the main body responsible for the museum sector is the Scottish Museum Council (SMC), which acts as both a membership and an advisory organisation for local authority and independent museums. Founded in 1964, SMC had originally been the main channel of UK central government support for Scottish museums. It is an independent non-for-profit organisation with the mission to improve the quality of museum and gallery provision throughout Scotland for the public good. In the 1980s and 1990s, its role and services have

developed significantly, reflecting the shifts in museum conservation services, fund-raising, marketing services, information technology, training, research and scholarship (Ambrose, 1995).

The *Leisure Learning Programme* was one of the first educational initiatives of the SMC (Ambrose, 1995). It was established in 1986 and ran for four years. The programme's main objective was the development of informal learning sessions for adults and family groups and its success led to the establishment of the *Museum Education Initiative* in 1992-93, which focused on school groups (Ambrose, 1995). Apart from organising various educational projects of this kind, the SMC has supported museum education through regular consultation publications and annual reports. Even though research on adult education in Scottish museums is limited, Scottish museums follow the example of their counterparts elsewhere in the UK regarding the policy framework.

The *Charter for the Arts* (Scottish Arts Council, 1993) was the result of consultations that lasted over 18 months, with focus groups, consultation meetings and conferences and in many ways became the precursor of the National Strategy to be adopted by the Scottish Executive a few years later.

Indeed, one of the first priorities of the devolved Scottish Executive was to design an action plan for Scottish cultural life. *Creating our Future...Minding our Past* (Scottish Executive, 2000) 'is a framework for action which will underpin the development of Scotland's cultural life over the next four years. It is driven by the Executive's vision of Scotland, confident in its cultural identity'. It acknowledges that museums and galleries make an important contribution to education, scholarship, citizenship, social inclusion and tourism; in order to maximise the educational potential, the Executive supports the further development of educational programmes in museums. According to the Strategy, education and culture are interconnected, so that cultural activities could contribute to developing inclusive societies where learning, creative thinking and interpersonal experiences are there for all. Further, the National Cultural Strategy introduced for the first time the Cultural Coordinators Scheme, which was launched in 2002 and was administered by the Scottish Arts Council; the coordinators 'will liaise with arts and cultural organisations, including the heritage sector, and organise activities which ensure

that our national cultural resources are used to the advantage of all young people' (Scottish Executive, 2000; 41).

In 2002, SMC undertook a National Audit to establish a picture of the contribution museums make not only to the preservation of national heritage, but also to other key areas of Scottish life, such as tourism, learning, and community development (SMC, 2002). With a wide range of respondents and a response rate of 86 per cent, the Audit aimed at producing an accessible and comprehensive database of information about collections and public services in Scottish museums. It showed that only half of the museums in Scotland had a specific education policy and identified that 'the critical challenge facing government and the learning and museum sectors is how best to bridge the gap between the great potential for learning through museums, and actual provision of high quality learning opportunities for all' (SMC, 2002; 12).

Nevertheless, the Scottish Executive's lifelong learning strategy (2003) did not refer to museums and galleries as spaces for adult education or learning in the community at all; instead, the lifelong learning programme seems to be more focused on increasing employability and social inclusion, mainly through further education and training. It appears that museums and galleries are in the Scottish Executive's plans as part of its cultural strategy, but not in relation to lifelong learning.

According to the more recent *National Learning and Access Strategy for museums and galleries in Scotland* (SMC, 2005), museums are part of every citizen's cultural entitlement. The term 'cultural entitlement' was coined by the Cultural Commission, an advisory organisation reporting to the Scottish Executive on the cultural sector in Scotland (Cultural Commission, 2005). According to the Commission, a new type of 'cultural consumer' has emerged on the Scottish cultural scene, including the museum sector:

Faced with an empowered and discerning population who face increasing pressures on their time, cultural organisations will need to keep pace with the commercial sector in terms of quality of experience and offering value for both time and for money...Many leisure venues have broadened their offer to the consumer so that a wider range of activities is possible under one roof (Cultural Commission, 2005; 13).

The Cultural Commission stresses the importance of museums becoming inspirational learning environments, through the effectiveness of 'object-based' learning. However, it is stated that

most of the funding is short term and project based. Other challenges for Scottish museums are the irregular engagement of 'users' and the lack of agreed standards or framework for measuring impact. A strategic and operational relationship between museums and galleries and the educational community is vital, according to the report, alongside the enhancement of access and infrastructure, curatorial standards, marketing, promotion, links with tourism and audience development.

Again, the term learning, rather than education, is used in the Scottish Museum Council report (SMC, 2005). In this document, learning embodies the notion of an active, responsive exchange, rather than an one-way transmission of knowledge from a 'teacher' to a 'learner'. The report states that changes in the organisation and practice of lifelong learning have been accompanied by parallel developments in other areas of government; the example given is the Best Value scheme⁹, which, with its emphasis on continuous performance improvement, efficiency and sustainability, draws attention to organisational accounting and performance functions. According to the report,

This emphasis on standards and best practice is reflected within museum learning through, for example, the Museums, Libraries and Archives 'Inspiring Learning for All' framework. ILFA provides a 'Measure Learning Toolkit' for museums to develop a common language for assessing, planning, and demonstrating the impacts of learning. Supported by SMC, six museums are piloting this framework with a view to promoting its uptake in Scotland (SMC, 2005; 13).

Therefore, no real differences between the Scottish museum sector and its English counterpart are to be found. Apart from minor, specific schemes that are unique to Scotland, most museum and government cultural policy and research follow the same ideals for museums; that is, 'capitalising' on lifelong learning and social inclusion, showing increased emphasis on accountability, impact measurement and marketing techniques, and securing funding for the sustained delivery of services.

⁹ Best Value – A framework based on a set of nationally determined indicators to help local authorities measure, manage and improve their performance (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, online, 2005).

f. Learning or education? A discussion

The literature on museum education for adults usually involves an adaptation of children's learning and teaching methods for adult groups; discourses of community engagement in combination with inclusion, access and empowerment; or, most of the times, long lists of examples of good practice of adult education programmes in museums and recommendations for more good practice of the same kind.

Constructivism and hermeneutics offer a more social or personal dimension of learning and an affirmation of one's prior 'knowledges'. However, they do not challenge the hegemonic orders of truth communicated by museums in the first place. The consistent efforts to examine *how* people learn in the museum have left questions in relation to the educational content and the reasons for its selection unanswered. Applying learning theories to understand educational processes in the museum space has helped museum educators recognise and organise the different stages of learning, in order to improve access and engagement with the exhibitions. But the predominance of *studies on visitors* was arguably not in balance with *studies on exhibitions*, objects or artworks. Although many museological studies focused on new ways of using museum and gallery space to present exhibitions (Greenberg et al., 1996), their focus was more on re-presentation, rather than the re-ordering of established knowledge and truths. Even though learning theories cast light on the *subject* of the museum experience, they do not consider the *object*. As will be shown from the findings of this research, visitors are often encouraged to participate, but in exhibitions which are mounted on the basis of the rules of the old museum, that which constructed histories according to hierarchies and unequal relations of power. The emphasis on how visitors learn elides difficult questions in relation to who decides what they learn and why.

The predominance of learning rather than educational theory in the body of work discussed above is therefore significant. Learning theory is not to be conflated with education. In the Gramscian (1971) and Williams's (1973) tradition, education, culture and power are examined together in relation to curriculum and the social interests they perpetuate. Even though curriculum might often be treated more technically in mainstream education, the hidden curricula of the 'selective tradition' of the 'significant' past (Williams, 1973) remain unchallenged.

Although the use of learning theory may help understand visitor behaviour in the museum space, there is no consideration of factors such as the economic, cultural and social capital (Bourdieu, 1986) which might affect the museum visit; yet, as research has shown (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991; Di Maggio and Useem, 1978), these are determining factors for participation in museums in the first place.

The emphasis on learning theory rather than on education is part of the new trend towards 'empowering' the 'self-managed' learner. This, in my view, is a rather instrumental and reductionist way of viewing education. Learning in the post-modern museum is seen as an asset which has to be closely monitored and reported. The literature shows the ways that new public management discourses have entered the museum field, creating an overall consensus about the need for accountability and the continuous economic and other capitalisation of every aspect of the museum 'experience'. Constructivism and hermeneutics do not challenge and replace old ideas in the museum; they dress them in new garments, apparently liberal but still compliant with the dominant status quo.

2. Adult education, cultural criticism and the museum: a tale of two absences

Apart from the discourses that have dominated the thinking around learning in the post-modern museum, other theoretical work problematized its educational role. Whilst literature on learning in the exhibition space for children is rich, research on adult education in museums has been minimal —strangely enough, the references to and bridges with adult education in the UK have been even fewer.

One of the earliest pieces of research specific to adult learning in museums was Chadwick's (1980). His doctoral study focused on the ways museums can extend their educational and recreational offer to adults, through examining public perceptions of them. The aim of the research was to look at how visitors' needs could be met through a closer understanding of their views on the museum function and role. His research questions related to the function of museum and art gallery in terms of community education, the changes that needed to take place, the content of exhibitions and finally, issues around the training of museum staff. Using grounded theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), Chadwick applied a mixed methods approach,

combining interviews with museum workers and a questionnaire survey which collected information regarding socio-economic status, opinions and attitudes and values placed on the educational role of museums and art galleries. Chadwick's research was pioneering in its findings, concluding that the public wants more direct involvement in museum affairs, engagement with the exhibition development, as well as better publicity of museum events. According to Chadwick,

The implication drawn from the literature and correspondence is that the museum has increasingly, and in some cases, strongly, developed an educational role. Its basic purpose appears to remain the attainment of knowledge, but this, in turn, finds expression through the museums' educational function. The rather disordered picture of the museum role might seem to be paralleled by an almost reciprocal confusion on the part of the general public, particularly with reference to the educational role of the museums (1980; 60).

In terms of the impact of museums in community learning, Chadwick mentions variations in relation to different museums, making distinctions according to the type of institution, the importance of the collections and their relevance to the community:

The question as to whether museums were making any impact on their communities was also a complex one as it may be a matter of degree. Numerous examples exist to indicate the popularity and potential of institutions such as open air folk museums, which, with their comparatively less formal and austere atmosphere, have tended to put members of the public at ease both recreationally and educationally. In these instances 'community' might appear to have a spiritual, as well as a geographical base (1980; 61).

The educational role of the museum, according to Chadwick, depends on the dichotomy between 'elitist tradition and egalitarian change' (1980; 76). He acknowledges that museum workers often assume a role of social purpose and want to link more closely with their communities, however, due to lack of resources, institutional resistance to change and possible loss of powers as a result of partnerships, these claims remain often at a theoretical level, without taking any material form. Chadwick argues that museums need to resist taking on the role of 'adjuncts' in education, and on the contrary, adopt a firm position in both formal education as well as informal learning provision. At that early stage, it is fascinating to see to what extent Chadwick could predict the challenges museum education would face in the decades to come: even though he refers to projects offering community engagement in exhibition planning and interpretation, he argues that they still remained separate cases, confirming the rhetoric on the social purpose of museums, rather than their real presence within community life. Indeed,

From the evidence it may be inferred that the public felt museums might enable people to become better citizens, but that their responses had been made within the context of the museum as purveyor of 'culture', and not as a community oriented institution... Few offerings of universal or specific interest appear to draw substantial numbers of working class people to the museum. It can be deduced from the evidence that in theory museums offer a form of education for those who spent the minimum amount of time at school, but, as suggested above, that offer has not been taken up to any marked degree, or is likely to be on the terms usually presented (1980; 106).

Karp et. al. (1992) make an interesting distinction between the terms 'audience', a passive entity, and 'community', an active agent, in their relation with the museum; they support that the most common trend in museum education today is to attract 'non-visitors' through 'audience development' schemes. Perin (1992), in the same edited volume, suggests that recognising the different interpretative resources audiences bring with them —resources that are different from and more important than personal characteristics such as socio-economic background— provides a way to bridge the chasm between those who make exhibitions and those who visit them. Perin offers 'a cultural theory of representation and reception' (1992; 182), which describes 'the operations of an ideal communicative circle for museums, in which exhibition makers and viewers co-operate in achieving mutual understanding' (1992; 183). However,

Understanding does not necessarily entail agreement: it may lead not only to audience ratification and appropriation of the exhibition maker's perspectives, but also to audience resistance and reinterpretation as well (1992; 183).

Perin (1992) conducted ethnographic fieldwork in the National Museum of History in Washington DC and identified five ways in which curators understand visitors' behaviour in the displays: namely,

- the *temporal* model, which sees visitors as 'striders' (those walking quickly through the exhibitions), 'strollers' (the people spending more time), and 'readers' (those spending even more time reading texts and absorbing exhibitions);
- the *active-learning* model, which emphasises people's, and especially children's, physical interaction with computer screens and other interactive devices;
- the *market* model, in which visitors are seen as 'consumers' whose 'needs', 'attitudes' or 'preferences' are to be satisfied or shaped by the exhibition producers;

- the *rhetorical* model, or how to persuade or even proselytize visitors about the curators' choices and the 'uniqueness' of scholarship;
- the *aesthetic* model, in which aesthetic values are seen as valuable and compelling in themselves.

Perin (1992) argues that visitors are as creative and constructivist in receiving exhibitions' messages as curators and designers are in composing them. However, he also makes a point of the exhibition needing to enlarge visitors' mental space in order to situate, contextualise, translate, evaluate and interpret what they experience.

Dodd (1992) states that most projects that are addressed to wider communities have a social history focus; however, she suggests that the challenge for educators is how to make all museum collections accessible to the public, from art to science and archaeology. She argues that adult and community learning in the museum is not about achieving high levels of educational attainment; rather, it is about negotiating values, making contacts, building confidence. This process would open the doors of museums to everyone, not just the elite. Dodd argues that such a change would be political and might have repercussions for the institutional status quo of museum professionals:

As new groups gain confidence, they will begin to question the institutions –why they collect what they do, what their displays are like, how 'relevant' they are, what facilities and provision they make for the community at large, even the fundamental role of the museum. How often do museums really address the questions 'why are we here?' (1992; 32).

Walsh (1992) in his critique of the post-modern condition and the role of museums and the heritage industry in the commercialization of the past, argues against what he calls 'a consideration of superficialities' in dealing with historical space. According to him, the heritage industry promotes the past 'as that which is entirely complete and removed from the present' (1992; 4). Walsh gives an account of the conservation and preservation movements in the UK and shows how the emergence of the heritage industry is not a characteristic of a climate of decline as Hewison (1987) suggests, but that it should also be seen as part of a wider marketization of culture which expanded during the 1980s. Walsh offers a model of adult learning in the museum which is derived from Jameson's idea of 'cognitive mapping' (1988); according to this, the Interactive Video Disc (IDV) allows visitors to access not just images of

material on display in the museum, 'but images of archived material, images of the places where the material was found, including maps....the user may wish to develop an understanding of an entire region, or may wish to concentrate on a specific place, and within that place, investigate a certain period' (1992;168). Walsh is particularly interested in the 'heritagization of space' (1992; 138); he proposes an emphasis on creating 'ecomuseums' —museums which take a more holistic approach to the understanding of space and involve not only museology, but also archaeology, social history, natural history, geology and any other discipline that contributes to the understanding of people and places. The ecomuseum is 'a museum concerned with the total ecology and environment, natural and human, of a defined locality' (Boylan quoted in Walsh, 1992; 162).

Anderson (1999) takes a more radical position and supports the complete breaking down of museums' institutional standing. According to him, if learning is at the heart of the project of the 'new' museum, it should encourage self-directed, informal learning even for those who visit museums as part of formal education, like schools, universities and colleges. He supports a philosophy of the 'use of artefacts' as against their glorification as 'immortal', or immensely precious; 'objects are essential and would have a natural, useful and limited life, but only as part of the whole work of the museum' (1999; 9). Boundaries between museums, other services, like colleges, libraries, urban studies centres, design workshops etc. and the environment would be reduced and museums would be organised as resources for the community: 'The museum as an institution could be transitory and need not have a permanent status' (1999; 12).

Further, Chadwick and Stannett (1995) note the lack of research on the educational role of the museum for adult visitors, in comparison to extensive interest by the academia and policy makers on the provision for schools. Anderson (1995) also notes a potential impoverishment of museum learning due to its relative isolation from current adult education theory and practice, but claims that museum learning, if properly developed, could enrich the learning programmes by the adult education sector. Bown (1995) attempts to answer the question why adult educators should use museums, whereas Hooper-Greenhill gives the museum educator's perspective: she discusses adult education in museums in the 1990s, defining adult education as 'all those varied sessions, leisure activities and learning partnerships that are organised by museum staff to enable any adult to enjoy the museum experience and comprises formal and non-formal provision inside the museum and in various locations in the community' (1995b:64). She makes a case for

the need to take different forms of intelligence and learning styles into account and argues that '...providing for adult education offers museums today the chance to demonstrate clear social, cultural and economic value' (1995b:62). Finally, Moffat makes an argument for the recognition of the broader contribution of museums to the public:

Museums and galleries already have a long-established tradition of contributing to adult education, in particular to non-vocational, liberal and lifelong learning. The very act of interpreting collections through a range of strategies is intended to assist understanding and facilitate learning. In this sense, museums and galleries have for many years provided informal learning opportunities for adults through the written and non-written contexts given to collections (1995; 138).

Most research on the education of adults has centred on science museums, where learning seems to be more explicit due to the nature of the collections and exhibitions. Science museums were also the first museums in Britain which used interactive exhibits in their displays. McManus (1992) investigated the motivation behind the visits in the Science Museum in London. She found that people were coming to the Museum because they had a general interest in science; they wanted an enjoyable family outing as well as seeking some form of entertainment.

A rather different study was MacDonald's research on the 'Food for Thought' exhibition (2002), again at the Science Museum. MacDonald's work was pioneering in two senses: first, it was one of the first pieces of work that opposed the dominant discourses of the self-directed learner; second, it was a purely qualitative study, using ethnographic methods. MacDonald argues regarding the exhibition:

One strategy was the incorporation of 'fun'. ... 'Fun' was regarded as important because it made exhibits accessible: it disrupted what was sometimes characterised by the Team as a distancing authority in the traditional Museum.... Incorporating a mixture of types of media –interactives, inventory objects, audio-visuals, replica sets— was one way in which visitors were seen to be being offered 'choice'. Choice would mean that visitors would have to be 'active' rather than 'passive': rather than just receiving whatever the museum presented them with, visitors were conceptualised as actively making choices between different types of display. These were visitors as shoppers, busily making their way through aisles of products, picking things out and handling them, choosing whatever caught their mood...the opportunity to 'pick and mix' (2002; 165).

MacDonald suggests that the exhibition was considered successful. Nevertheless, she doubts the criteria of this success and criticises constructivist approaches of learning. According to her,

critical pedagogy seemed to have little to do with the museum's set mission to increase visitor numbers and enhance science education for 'ordinary' people. In any case,

The virtual visitor of the Food exhibition was in many respects conceptualised as a child...the visitor to Food was anticipated as easily bored, possessing only a short attention span, lacking in knowledge and advanced cognitive skills, seeking fun and choice, and relatively uninterested in science. All of this was done to avoid creating an exhibition which would 'go over the heads of ordinary people', which would be inaccessible to those without the prior knowledge, skills or patience that so many other exhibitions demand.... In particular, visitors were not conceptualised as likely to make a rigorous political critique of the exhibition ... Key aspects of being 'democratising' in the exhibition were the emphases on choice, consumption and fun. Providing more choice, consumption and fun was providing more agency and, therefore, was more empowering of visitors. This was a concept of the visitor as an 'active citizen', which contrasted to the more passive visions of them elsewhere (2002; 181).

This 'active' dimension of museum visiting has also explored by psychological theory. For example, according to Csikzentmihalyi and Robinson (1990) adults, when they look at art, are caught in a 'flow'; this feeling makes them fully engaged with their own self and thus they feel different from others (differentiation), as well as feeling connected with other 'entities' (integration). The dialectical relationship between these two states of mind counts as learning, a type of learning that is more concerned with the growth of the self, rather than any cognitive attainment (Csikzentmihalyi and Hermanson, 1995).

Duncan (1995) responds to this and other claims connecting education with aesthetics and metaphysics in her study of art museums as ritual sites. She argues that the educational museum is no less a ritual space than an aesthetic one and maintains that:

Without rejecting valuable sociological insights, I treat museums not only as socially distinguishing forms but also as structures with substantive cultural content, a content that is not always or not entirely subject to sociological or political description. That is to say, while art museums are understood to be both producers of ideology and products of social and political interests, they are not entirely reducible to these categories. It is, in my view, precisely the complexity of the art museum —its existence as a profoundly symbolic cultural object as well as social, political and ideological instrument— that makes the notion of the museum as ritual so attractive (1995; 5).

Duncan (1995) offers an insightful examination of the ceremonial nature of museum exhibitions; visitors, enacting their own drama, attempt to connect to the history or the meanings of the objects displayed in a time and space that differentiates them from the outside world. Museum

visiting, in this view, is an experience similar to 'certain medieval cathedrals where pilgrims followed a structured narrative route through the interior, stopping at prescribed points for prayer and contemplation' (1995; 12).

However, it was Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), the German cultural critic, who first wrote persuasively in relation to what Duncan describes above as ceremonial behaviour in museums and galleries. In his widely cited essay *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (first published in 1935, re-published in 1969), Benjamin used the term 'aura' to describe the sense of awe and reverence one presumably experiences in the presence of unique works of art. According to him, this aura inheres not in the object in itself but rather in external attributes such as its known line of ownership, its limited exhibition, its publicized authenticity or its cultural or real economic value. Benjamin's essay addresses a modern, early twentieth century technological transformation in the nature of art and its political implications. His insights are especially useful for the political analysis of film. Prior to the advent of mass reproduction methods, such as photography or film, the artwork had a specific aura which gave it almost a cult value; pilgrimage and contemplation elevated the artwork and the artist to the status of genius. Benjamin argues that mechanical reproduction permits the involvement of the masses in culture and politics; it makes mass culture and mass politics possible. According to Benjamin, 'for the first time in world history, mechanical reproduction emancipates the work of art from its parasitical dependence on ritual' (1969; 224). 'Instead of being based on ritual', Benjamin writes, the function of art 'begins to be based on another practice –politics' (ibid.). He suggests a new kind of art, which, rather than being theologised, serves political purposes and stands in direct relation to the political struggles of the time. Although Benjamin's writings have been influential in the area of art and cultural criticism, his work has not been taken up by museum studies so far. Whilst his ideas guided the thinking behind this study at an earlier stage, his particular emphasis on film and the historical context of his writing did not render his work particularly useful in the analysis of the educational role of the museum and galleries in contemporary Dundee.

Hal Foster, the American art critic, has also been influenced by Benjamin's ideas about the effects of mechanical reproduction on art works. Writing in a more current context, Foster (1983; 1985) focused on art in postmodernity, the concept of the political in contemporary art and on issues of cultural resistance. In *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on postmodern culture*,

Foster, together with authors such as Habermas, Krauss, Baudrillard, Said and others, took positions against what Foster called a 'postmodernism of reaction' —instead, what they proposed is a 'postmodernism of resistance':

A postmodernism of resistance arises as a counter-practice not only to the official culture of modernism but also to the "false normativity" of a reactionary postmodernism. In opposition (but not *only* in opposition), a resistant postmodernism is concerned with a critical deconstruction of tradition, not an instrumental pastiche of pop- or pseudo- historical forms, with a critique of origins, not a return to them. In short, it seeks to question rather than exploit cultural codes, to explore rather than conceal social and political affiliations (1983; xii).

His later book, *Recodings* (1985), established Foster's critical position in contemporary art and architecture. According to him, 'political art is now conceived less in terms of the representation of a class subject (à la social realism), than of a critique of social representations (gender positioning, ethnic stereotyping etc)' (1985; 141). Foster argues for the political engagement of artists not in a technocratic or instrumental view of culture, but in a critical project of questioning representations and assumptions of truth. Foster works with Foucault and Baudrillard in the analysis of the relation between art and capital and distinguishes between 'political art', which reproduces ideological representations, from an 'art with a politic' concerned with 'the structural positioning of thought and the material effectivity of practice within the social totality' (1985; 155). Although Foster's analysis of art as a space of a contestation of perspectives relates closely to this study, it has not defined its theoretical underpinnings; Foster had a particular focus on art and its criticism, rather than a broader socio-historical analysis of museums and galleries as educational institutions.

Apart from these more radical analyses of the relation of culture with power and despite —or possibly due to— the renewed significance of the educational role of the museum (Hein and Alexander, 1998; Hirsch and Silverman, 2000; Leinhardt and Crowley, 2000; Leinhardt et al., 2002; Nichols, 1992; Paris, 2002; Pitman, 1999; Sachatello-Sawyer, 2000), there have also been signs of retrenchment to older ideas and values about museums and their relation to people. These discourses seem to favour museums as sites of distinction rather than popular culture.

In particular, the Institute of Ideas (IoI), a society of intellectuals founded in 2000 in London, has led a passionate attack on the 'changing' museum, in favour of its more traditional and authoritative role. According to the IoI website (IoI, online, 2006), 'freed from the constraints of

demands for practical policy, participants became creative thinkers'; museums and their role in society was one of the group's interests. Josie Appleton, a member of the Institute, questioned museums' primary role in civil society: is it to look after their collections or to attract audiences? Are museums about research or entertainment? (Appleton, 2001) Along the same lines with Furedi, another member of the IoI, who has written on the role of contemporary intellectuals (2004), Appleton argues:

A new political agenda now dominates museum policy and has begun to create a new type of museum. The rallying cry of this new political agenda is that museums should find their rationale, not in their collections, but in 'The People'. But 'The People' that museums are so anxious to follow is a pure projection hatched within the establishment—for the service of establishment interests (2001; 2).

In a response to the Institute of Ideas from an adult education perspective, Barr (2005) argues against the Institute of Ideas and what she sees as an elitist and limiting position and supports that,

To put it bluntly, it is blindingly obvious that the consumption of culture for most people most of the time has very little to do with public subsidies for creative work or audience-building or widening access strategies. It has everything to do with the performance of market oriented cultural industries and mass-popular consumption...Many adult educators have by now lost heart. Renewed efforts to work towards a reinvigorated independent popular education movement cannot work by old rules, limited by the arguments of Furedi. New ones have to be found. I believe that some of these are being forged within the arts and museums access movement (2005; 110).

3. The case of galleries, taste and the omnivores

Research on art museums and galleries presents a substantial and separate realm in the literature, since the nature of their collections, exhibitions and often their audiences can be distinct from those of museums. Arguably, it was once again in the academic literature that the unique institutional make-up of the art gallery was defined, legitimated and sustained: the creation of a system of classifying, interpreting and evaluating art works through the disciplines of art history and criticism, connoisseurship and aesthetics, prescribed the definitive boundaries between those with an art taste from those 'without' (Prior, 1999). The development of the art of the Kantian 'pure gaze' in the first public museums of the eighteenth century in Europe and the subsequent widening of the art galleries to a mainly bourgeois public in the nineteenth, has been analysed extensively in seminal works elsewhere (Prior, 2002; Bennett, 1995; Brown, 1995; McLellan,

1994; Mattick, 1993; Pointon, 1993; 1994; Sherman, 1987; 1989; Sherman and Rogoff, 1994). Therefore, the focus here is on more recent research on art museums' audiences, mainly in the UK, but also in continental Europe and America.

A similar survey to that in Bourdieu and Darbel's *The Love of Art* (original title *L'amour de l'art. Les Musées et leur public*, published in 1966 and translated in English in 1991) was conducted in British museums by Merriman (1989), who, having taken into account Bourdieu and Darbel's research, examines the phenomenon in more contemporary terms. Merriman criticises Bourdieu and Darbel for having looked solely at art galleries in France, 'the extreme end of the museum spectrum'; for not having considered 'accidents of an individual's history and psychology', and also for having failed to examine the views of non-visitors (Merriman, 1989). Merriman carried out a postal survey of 1,500 adults, and found that frequent visitors were more likely to have a specific interest in the displays, whereas non-frequent visitors would go on the basis of a more general interest (Merriman, 1989). However, apart from Merriman's valuable work, there is no other UK museum research on contemporary visiting habits which takes Bourdieu and Darbel's work into account. While museum literature in the UK appears very susceptible to influences from the other side of the Atlantic, the absence of any theoretical discussion of Bourdieu and Darbel's findings and analysis in UK museum literature suggests a relative neglect of continental European ideas. According to Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri,

Bourdieu's early work...has been very influential within sociology, but has not been much used within museum visitor or learning studies. This is partly because it was not translated into English until 1991 (2001; 24).

However, research on museum education was scarce in the UK before the 1990s; in fact, it was not until the beginning of the 1990s that museum education research started to flourish. Perhaps the reason that Bourdieu and Darbel's seminal work¹⁰ did not have the influence that we might anticipate stems primarily from the fact that *The Love of Art* was not seen by museum professionals as a 'usable' learning theory to work with; it did not provide a toolkit to measure performance indicators, or support a postmodern model of constructing and deconstructing knowledge, irrespective of structural conditions. Bourdieu and Darbel's work (1991) opened up

¹⁰ For critique on Bourdieu and Darbel's *The Love of Art* (1991), see Fyfe and Ross (1996) and Fyfe (1996).

and located museums within society and its inequalities; hence, their ideas had a modernist, structural analysis basis, which, at the time of establishing a profession, was not exactly music to the ears of the museum postmodernists.

In contrast, within North American literature, studies of art museum audiences tested Bourdieu and Darbel's theory on the basis of a very different intention: namely, 'understanding consumers' commitment to arts institutions is a vital part of understanding the broad framing of aesthetic experience...museums are being asked to replace government subsidies with different kinds of earned income' (Glynn et al., 1996; 259). Blau (1988), using a Survey of Public Participation in the Arts (1982), found that attendance at artistic events is dependent on individual characteristics, like education, gender and income. However, these characteristics account for variation in arts participation primarily in metropolitan centres and not in rural areas.

DiMaggio and Ostrower (1990), using the same survey, examined black and white participation in Euro-American and African-American art museums. They found that race is less important as predictor of art gallery attendance by comparison with socio-economic status. In an earlier review of forty-four studies of art museum visitors, DiMaggio and Useem (1978) concluded that art audiences belong to the elite classes and that ethnic minorities are underrepresented. According to the study, arts play a significant role in defining class boundaries. The authors argue that since high culture is often associated with high class, visitors tend to be motivated to visit in order to acquire higher social credibility and status. Hendon (1990), comparing visitors to non-visitors, found that the first belong to upper educational, occupational, and income groups; they engage with exhibitions and have some art background. Glynn et. al. (1996), researching visitors' perceptions of the art museum as a source of status, found that 'prestige-oriented' visitors tended to visit more and attended exclusive special events.

In general terms, several of the large-scale studies which examined secondary data derived from the US Census Survey of Public Participation in the Arts in 1982, conclude that there is a strong inter-correlation between the attendance of several genres of 'high' art, like going to the opera, ballet, the theatre or visiting art galleries with higher social, educational and financial levels.

In contrast to the studies that confirm Bourdieu and Darbel's findings (1991), there has also been research in the US that challenged it. Peterson and Kern (1996) tried to prove the existence of a steady trend over the last two decades in North America for people with a 'high' art taste (defined as people having claimed to like both opera and classical music and to prefer one of these to all other kinds of music) to also have wider, more varied tastes for other more popular forms of art. This trend was labelled 'omnivorousness'. Despite the fact that people with more 'low-brow' tastes also seemed to show evidence of wider preferences, it is mostly noted within 'high-brow' elites. Peterson and Kern (1996) therefore claim that 'omnivorousness' is a new trend that might replace 'snobbishness' or overturn Bourdieu's notion of 'distinction' (1984), which supports the correlation between socio-economic status and cultural appreciation. Nevertheless, it is still considered a tendency which has to be proven over a longer period of time and through a broader examination of art genres. This development could be attributed to the general increase of the variety and offer of cultural goods in late capitalism, rather than to any underlying disposition towards breadth of taste.

Similar research in the UK (Warde et. al., 2000) has shown that 'omnivorousness' could be a tendency more characteristic of the US, where class has always been a less manifest determinant of art appreciation than in Europe. Warde, Tomlinson and McMeekin (2000), who used the UK Health and Lifestyles Survey (HLS) of 1984-5 and 1992, found that the levels of omnivorousness did not change in Britain over this seven-year period:

Participation in general is partly a function of the economic, social and cultural resources of Britons, indicating the persistence of class differentiated cultural and leisure participation (Warde et.al, 2000; 28)

Nevertheless, they claim that the evidence that the British middle-class is averse to popular culture is weak. As in North America (Gartman, 1991), the middle classes are appropriating a taste for popular culture, while still trading social and cultural capital in the spheres of high art and elite distinction. However, the types of participation may well be significant (for example a comparison between attending sporting activities and art galleries), as well as the levels; it is necessary to take account of the level of commitment or degree of familiarity that middle class groups have with certain popular culture activities (Gronow, 1997). Warde, Tomlinson and McMeekin conclude that:

The dominant interpretation of omnivorousness is that reducing snobbishness, by eliminating an earlier intolerance and condescension of the privileged for popular culture, is inherently democratic. This spin has typically resulted in analysis rejoicing in the forces of the market, for markets permit access for all sufficient pecuniary resources to the complete range of commodities. Yet, it is also the case that it is the privileged themselves who indulge most readily, and thus obtain greater benefit from, opportunities for omnivorousness. The effect might be to intensify social division of resources under cover of a veneer of universal acceptance of popular culture (2000; 41).

It might seem that the omnivorousness thesis actually reasserts Bourdieu and Darbel's (1991) theoretical propositions, though understood in the context of early 21st century political and cultural economy.

In the next section, I move on to examine the literature that relates museum educational work with social inclusion.

4. Museums and the discourse of social inclusion

The need to respond to social and policy changes has led to consistent efforts to increase participation in museums, particularly because of the discourse on social inclusion. Here I am going to examine literature on the ways in which the idea of social inclusion has been adopted by museums in order to attract marginalised groups and non-visitors. In order to do this I examine a number of documents, all published since 2000, which illustrate firstly the processes through which government policy on social inclusion entered the museum agenda; and secondly how museums have adopted it with enthusiasm, in their efforts to increase government and financial support and to gain wider social recognition. I will try to make the confusion in relation to social inclusion apparent, and explore the tensions regarding respecting diversity and promoting social cohesion.

Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All (DCMS, 2000) was one of the first government publications on social inclusion in museums. After a brief discussion of the government's social inclusion targets, namely 'better educational achievement, increased employment prospects, improved health and reduced crime', there is a specific focus on learning as 'a powerful agent in combating social exclusion by giving people the abilities, skills and confidence to engage with society' (DCMS, 2000; 7). According to the report, only 23 per cent of the lower social classes visit museums compared with 56 per cent of the upper and middle

classes: thus, improving cultural activities can play a pivotal role for social cohesion and change. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport proposes that museums apply the principles of Best Value in order to 'consult with and involve their users in the provision of appropriate services' (2000; 9).

There is a notable change in language in pursuit of 'Best Value': visitors are now addressed as 'users'. There is an emphasis on 'services' and 'standards'. Such a discourse moves away from a language of democratic participation towards a discourse of consumerism (Clarke, 2004; Clarke at al., 2000). Further, the report stresses the need for museums and galleries to be 'vehicles for positive social change' (DCMS, 2000; 9), without defining what is meant by positive and what kinds of change could be considered negative. In order to help museums identify the causes of social exclusion, the report gives a long list of institutional, personal and social, perceptual and environmental barriers to people, who, it is assumed, would otherwise visit museums. Surprisingly, low income and poverty are part of a twenty-one bullet point list and, in this list, carry the same weight as lack of signage in buildings and poor transport links.

The report *Libraries, Museums, Galleries and Archives for All: Co-operating Across the Sectors to Tackle Social Exclusion* (DCMS 2001), published after the completion of a consultation process with museums and galleries, has as an overarching objective that 'social inclusion should be mainstreamed as a policy priority for all libraries, museums, galleries and archives' (2001; 8). Hence, according to the document, access should be improved through the collections and ICT, and outreach activities should involve consultation with community groups to identify their 'needs and aspirations'. Museums and galleries aim to become 'champions of the independent learner', and 'where appropriate, museums', galleries' and archives' collections and exhibitions should reflect the cultural and social diversity of the organisation's actual and potential audiences' (DCMS, 2001; 8). No clarification is given of what is meant by 'appropriate'. Museums are also exhorted to form partnerships with other organisations, develop inclusive projects and consider 'how they can further develop their role and act as agents of social change' (DCMS, 2001; 9). Again, the term social change is used in a very loose manner, but with the implication that it will be brought about through social inclusion policies.

Policies are being set but questions remain unanswered. For example, two issues were raised from most museums in their response during the consultation process: the funding gap between

setting policies and implementing them and, most crucially, the need to define the terms social inclusion and exclusion, and the differences between access, audience development and acting as agents for social change. No definitions as such are given anywhere throughout this document, apart from the methods proposed for pursuing the policy: 'Identify the people who are socially excluded and their distribution. Engage them and establish their needs' (DCMS, 2001; 9). The text makes enormous assumptions about the definition of these people, as well as about *their* needs and preferences. Do they feel excluded and distanced from mainstream culture? Do they want to be 'engaged'? Do they have the need to participate in a 'social inclusion initiative'? If these needs are accepted, there remains the problem of lack of designated funding for these purposes. A list of 'possible sources of funding' is given at the end of the document; however the onus is on museums and galleries to compete for these resources through stressful, time-consuming, and potentially unsuccessful applications.

Research into museums' policies and practices in respect of social inclusion tends to accept the discourse of inclusion as a positive development. Thus, museum policy becomes bound to the government's definition of the concept, taking its assertions as its main objectives. Similarly, museum research acquires the same position as its objects of study and 'its results become nothing more than the recapitulation of given systems of reference in state policy, rather than knowledge produced through critical analysis' (Popkewitz and Lindbland, 2000; 5). The research politics of attributing distinctive features to certain groups in order to identify them, frames the problem in a way that prescribes the solution. To put it differently, if difference in 'needs', 'lifestyles' and 'attitudes' are the reasons for exclusion, then the solution lies with policies that encourage individuals both to share and to 'share-hold' (Bessant, 2003). In the report commissioned by the Group for Large Local Authority Museums (GLLAM), we read:

There is no disputing the fact that museums are natural engines for social inclusion work as long as we choose to adopt this role... In so doing we have begun to redefine the traditional role of museums, and to demonstrate the social and educational values of museums more coherently than ever before. We have begun to make use of the cultural authority which ordinary people perceive us to have (GLLAM, 2000; 5).

Many questions arise here. Which factors constitute museums as the natural engines in the drive towards the social inclusion agenda? What are the reasons behind connecting their social and educational role with policies for social integration and cohesion? Finally, despite declarations for diversity, representation and democratic participation, why is there a need for ordinary

people to view museums as a cultural authority? What are the implications of using this authority as a vehicle for a consensual, hegemonic and top-down political project?

The above document discusses the fluid labels of social inclusion given in the museum sector such as: 'community capacity building; community involvement; interdepartmental community learning strategies; cultural strategies; lifelong learning; local regeneration; and so on' (GLLAM, 2000; 11). A typical example is given:

A working group in Edinburgh began life as the Equality Working Party and then became the Positive Action Group, then the Equal Opportunities Group, then the Social Exclusion Group and now the Social Inclusion Group. Access and anti-poverty also predate social inclusion but cover some of the same ground (GLLAM, 2000; 11).

Whether or not these terms cover the same ground, words like poverty and equality have become obsolete in the museum literature on social inclusion. The absence of such terms from policy discourse directs attention away from them and ultimately makes them irrelevant: in this circumstance, the shift is from structural inequalities and the need for redistribution towards fragmentation, a victimization and diminished view of the self (Byrne, 1999). Further, the report has found that social inclusion work is often opportunistic, due to lack of funding, and dependent on heroic efforts by individuals: 'Lack of support, lack of funding, and lack of clear policies and direction combined with the fuzziness and ambiguity of the concept of social inclusion itself has led to a situation where the good work being done is frequently invisible' (GLLAM, 2000; 18). Social change is measured through 'social outcomes' which museums need to deliver, namely 'personal growth and development; community empowerment; representation of inclusive communities; promoting healthier communities; enhancing educational achievement and promoting lifelong learning; tackling unemployment; and tackling crime' (GLLAM, 2000, 24). Despite the surprise that many would feel about museums adopting such roles, the problem arguably lies in the quantification of every aspect of the educational provision of the museum. This can often have a detrimental effect in the work done, since aspects of educational opportunities that cannot be measured quantitatively could be considered less significant.

In research conducted at the University of Leicester (Resource, 2001b), it was found that, within smaller museums, understandings of social inclusion are very fluid and most often interpreted as 'audience development'. Even though smaller museums can be closer to their communities and

less intimidating, their 'strength lies in terms of the impact they can have on individuals' (Resource, 2001b), rather than the community. Even though more intimate relationships can be forged with individual community members, volunteers for example, their impact on society is rather weak. In addition, for most of the museums, the demand for a social inclusion programming is a daunting one, 'perceived as an additional burden' (Resource, 2001b), since most of them, after serious cut-backs in state financial support, have very limited funding, barely enough for their survival.

One of the most comprehensive works on social inclusion in museums is *Including Museums: Perspectives on Museums, Galleries and Social Inclusion* (Dodd and Sandell, 2001), a selection of papers of a number of key museum professionals, artists, educators as well as ordinary visitors sharing their experiences after having participated in educational and inclusive projects in museums. Starting from a discussion of fundamental issues for museums, like their social and educational role, the authors attempt to unpack questions of the impact museums can have on social exclusion. It seems that the social purpose of museums is directly linked to the social inclusion discourse, arguing that:

Some critics have understood inclusion solely in terms of recent demands made by government and others external to the sector... Working to promote social inclusion does not require museums to 'dumb down' nor to become instruments of governmental reform. However, the social inclusion agenda, undoubtedly presents museums with the need for change – change in philosophy, values, goals and practices (Dodd and Sandell, 2001; 4-5).

A more flexible approach to the government policies on inclusion is suggested, endorsing the multidimensional and interrelated nature of exclusion (Dodd and Sandell, 2001). However, the emphasis remains on an individual level rather than the wider society, which may diminish the significance of the educational role of the museum regarding broader social goals. However, emergent voices of resistance are also there:

Criticisms may find support in the work of these cultural and social theorists who view inclusion policies as motivated by a government desire to stem disorder and reduce the mounting financial burden of poverty. Nevertheless, we would argue that the ideas which are presented within *Including Museums* are driven by different motivations based around social equality, democratisation and empowerment, motivations which have inspired the work of some museum staff who have been working towards inclusive agendas for many years, sometimes in the face of political opposition or disinterest (Dodd and Sandell, 2001; 14).

Nonetheless, the general confusion around what social inclusion is in museums is evidence of the problematic nature of the term. Without any discussion about real inequalities in income and education affecting attendance in museums, it obscures the real reasons behind people deciding to 'exclude' themselves from them (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991). Museums thus become vehicles of a political programme that promotes a sanitized version of reality where an unspecified underclass is in need of engagement, 'empowerment' and inclusion.

5. Conclusion

In this fairly lengthy overview, I have discussed academic and scholarly work, as well as empirical research and policy texts that have appeared in the UK museum scene almost from the beginning of the twentieth century. During the last two decades in particular an increasing volume of literature has moved the discussions around the educational role of the museum from a marginal position to the centre of attention, not just in the museum, but also in the educational, the cultural and even the social policy sector.

What was identified was a symbiotic relationship between post-modern academic theorising, policy discourse supportive of accountability and a competitive economic climate in which museums are obliged to maximise their business. A move towards post-modern approaches of theorising, which view museum attendance as a matter of personal choice and lifestyle, rather than the result of structural differentiation of social attributes, like class, gender or race, was identified. Further, I tried to present a shift from education towards a closer focus on learning.

There has been growing recognition of the need to view museums' educational provision as an 'asset', which needs to be marketed effectively within the competitive context of the contemporary cultural industries. A major part of the literature on museum education for adults stems from the need for museums to identify effective ways to evaluate their provision; in the current competitive climate where funding is limited, museums have to be accountable, set performance indicators and measure quantitative outcomes.

According to Thompson,

Making educational and cultural institutions more accountable to those who fund them may modernise and improve the quality of services they provide, but this is not necessarily the same as —or has anything to do with— creating a more socially just, culturally enriching or actively democratic society. Not everything that is worth doing is easily measured. In the same way, not everything that is easily measured is worth worrying about (Thompson, 2002; 3).

Finally, a tendency to connect learning in museums with other social policy discourses, like social inclusion, access, empowerment and regeneration was noted. There is almost a feeling of urgency amongst museum educators, not to be seen as ignorant or not responding well and promptly enough to the government targets. Nevertheless, through the analysis of relevant literature on social inclusion, I tried to show how fuzzy the understanding of such terms still is and how this could arguably lead to more confusion about what education in museums is or can be.

Hence, the focus on learning and its marketing was arguably the reason for adult education being absent from these developments. Either due to its language and history not being ‘fashionable’ or appropriate enough for the ‘new’, post-modern museum, or because adult educators themselves are suspicious of lifelong learning and other government policies, the result is that no communication between the two worlds occurs in any significant way. At the beginning of this chapter I identified a slow movement during the 1970s towards a convergence between radical adult education and museum and gallery work; nonetheless, I also showed how abrupt the cut was, when cultural studies retreated to the academia and museums found their economic situation so unstable as to turn to marketing solutions. Even in Scotland, where adult education has had a long tradition of working with the cultural sector, there were few signs of such an exchange.

More importantly, the focus on examining learning in the exhibition space as a process, rather than content, has left important questions about the hidden curricula of the old and the new museum aside. Issues like power, the unequal distribution of the means to appreciate art and culture and the reproduction of hegemonic and dominant discourses about what kinds of knowledge and education are considered worthwhile and which are not, do not appear in the literature. The over-emphasis of the postmodern museum on learning rather than education has been the main reason for the absence of any comprehensive discussion on *what* and *why* adults

learn what they do in the museum. Nonetheless, it is within this new thinking about learning in museums that challenging questions can now be raised.

If contemporary global and political contexts make it inevitable, for financial survival, that museums and galleries accept national policy and economic priorities, the space created within this new development allows for in-depth research and analysis of areas that have traditionally (and currently) been sidelined. Indeed, it makes such research even more necessary. The next chapter discusses theoretical resources for challenging education in museums and exploring answers and alternative possibilities.

The review of the literature on museum education highlighted the need to analyse museum visiting from a broader perspective, one that takes the relationship between culture and power in an unequal society into account. Therefore, this chapter focuses on constructing the theoretical framework of this thesis, by addressing the contribution of a number of related but distinctive theorists, whose work informs our understanding of the importance of cultural politics.

The theoretical backdrop of this study has been set by the work of Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) and Raymond Williams (1921-1988). The publication of Gramsci's work (1971), written between 1929 to 1935, inspired the revival of Western Marxism in the 1970s because of the centrality to his analysis of cultural power in sustaining unequal material relations between social classes. His concepts of hegemony, the role of the intellectual and the ethical state highlight the importance of education and cultural struggle in challenging the limits of 'common sense'. However, Gramsci was writing primarily about the political context of cultural struggle in a different society and during a different era. His work is highly relevant but has to be strengthened by other related theoretical resources. The contribution of Williams (1961; 1973; 1981), writing from a more recent tradition of British Cultural Studies, is therefore helpful. His emphasis on 'culture is ordinary', the power of the 'selective tradition' in education and the tripartite distinction of 'dominant, residual and emergent' cultural forms has relevance for the analysis of museum visiting.

Nevertheless, neither of these theorists explicitly addresses the nature of museum education and its role in wider relations of cultural power. Therefore, it was Pierre Bourdieu's (1930-2002) work which primarily offered the conceptual apparatus for the analysis of the educational role of the museums and galleries in the city of Dundee. His focus on a 'socio-analysis' (1990) of the cultural field as a contested space of diverse forces and agencies, in addition to his overcoming of the dichotomy between structure and agency (1990), have been the central analytical resources in this study from the initial stages of its conceptualisation to its conduct. In particular, the work of Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) and Bourdieu and Darbel (1991) provide distinctive theoretical and conceptual analyses relating to the nature of *habitus*, the social structuring of taste and the role of social and cultural capital in masking systematic class inequalities as

arbitrary. They start from shared concerns with the problem of social and cultural reproduction and the power of individual and institutional agency to initiate processes of change.

Finally, a number of other theoretical contributors are used in order to assist in the analysis of other, more specific issues that have arisen during the course of this research. First, the analysis by Habermas (1929-) on the colonisation of the 'life world' by the 'systems world' (1984) through his account of the growth of technical rationality casts light on what emerges from both official and academic texts as dominant trends towards marketization and accountability in museum education. Also, his distinctive contribution to understanding hermeneutics is introduced because it provides a bridge to methodological concerns addressed in the following chapter. Finally, Wenger's schema of 'engagement-imagination-alignment' (1998; 2000) and aspects of the work of two political theorists, Hannah Arendt (1906-1975) and Iris Marion Young (1949-2006), are discussed; all of them were particularly useful in the exploration of the alternative possibilities for museum education, as these were suggested by the research participants.

The final part of this chapter involves a critical discussion of the suggested theoretical framework. In particular, the importance of a gendered analysis of cultural power is highlighted as missing from the concerns that have occupied them. This gap, and how it might be filled, is particularly relevant to the final chapter of the thesis where alternative ways, beyond the limitations of dominant educational practices in museums today, are proposed.

1. Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams and cultural politics

a. Pedagogy and hegemony

Gramsci's work on pedagogy and his well-known construct of hegemony, alongside other useful concepts, such as the 'ethical state' and the 'organic intellectuals' (1971), provide analytical tools for the examination of the educational role of the museum.

What we can do, for a moment, is to fix two major superstructural 'levels': the one that can be called 'civil society', that is the ensemble of organisms commonly called 'private' and that of 'political society' or 'the State'. These two levels correspond on the one hand to the function of 'hegemony' which the dominant group exercises throughout society and on the

other hand to that of 'direct domination' or command exercised through the State and 'juridical' government (Gramsci, 1971; 12).

What Gramsci does here is a double inversion of Marxist thought. First, he argues for the importance of the function of the ideological superstructures; second, he values the ideological power of civil society (consensus) over political society (force). Because Marxists prioritise economic practices, according to Gramsci, they underestimate the degree to which superstructures can influence class-consciousness. Indeed, Marx argues that ideologies in themselves cannot change the world; practical action can (Ransome, 1992).

This revised approach in Marxist thinking is crucial. Civil society is not an autonomous social realm but very much part of State power: it is the idea of the State that has to be divided into the 'State-as-force' and the 'State-as-consensus'. Gramsci clearly argues that civil society is the 'hegemonic' apparatus serving the State in order to balance its coercive power (Holst, 2002). On numerous occasions, this position has indeed served nationalistic, religious and other purposes, through propaganda or other 'lighter' but often more penetrating means of mass persuasion. However, civil society's dependence on the state can be seen as its weakest point: if its role as supportive of the state's coercive power is not fulfilled, then its very existence cannot be guaranteed. The significance of this perspective for the economic survival of the museum and gallery sector today has already been discussed in the previous chapter. Hence, the degree of freedom civil society—and hence museums—have to operate independently needs to be critically assessed.

Gramsci has commented on the role of civil society in sustaining the 'ethical state' (Gramsci, 1971). According to him, part of civil society's hegemonic project is not only to maintain a consensus that would eliminate oppositional thinking, but also to teach and guide citizens towards a kind of morality defined by the dominant culture. This is particularly interesting in the case of the public museum which, since the nineteenth century, opened its Janus-faced doors to two kinds of 'publics': those selected few who would find in them personal distinction and self-appraisal, and the 'rest', who were meant to be instructed on the ethics codes of being virtuous and lawful, well-oiled particles in the consensual machinery of order and progress. As Bennett (1995) has pointed out, such a moralistic, top-down project was meant to regulate conduct and neutralise difference; with their doors open to everyone, the pseudo-democracy of

access for all was maintained. At the same time, the bourgeois project did indeed break the higher classes' exclusivity in visiting museums; for the first time in history, everyone could *potentially* visit.

The notion of hegemony is useful in order to understand the subtle ways in which museum and gallery exhibitions have traditionally been used to legitimise and hence re-affirm unequal social relations and the distribution of power. Today, museums have moved away from old distinctions between the elite and the masses; however, as I showed in the previous chapter, thinking about education as outcome-based learning, turning struggles for social justice into discourses of social inclusion or promoting individualised learning in the place of a collective and shared construction and understanding of history, reflect museums' re-established role in shaping knowledge and history.

Hobsbawm points out that Gramsci is the first Marxist theorist to integrate the working-class in the notion of the nation, and therefore examine the nation as a historical and social reality. The identification of society, the nation, people past and present, with the State and civil society generates and secures hegemony (Hobsbawm, 1982). Museums, as part of the civil society, have had a crucial role in creating and sustaining national and dominant ideologies. The role of civil society (and hence museums), according to Gramsci, is to adopt a 'common-sensical' inculcation of the state/nation ideology, and thus operate as a strong buttress against economic and other crises that could imbalance the equilibrium of power.

Further, Gramsci's concept of the 'organic intellectuals' can assist in the analysis of the positioning and function of museum educators and policy makers. According to Gramsci:

All men are intellectuals...but not all men in society have the function of intellectuals. (1971; 9).

Gramsci's tenet on the social function of the intellectuals is fundamental in the understanding of the construction of knowledge in the museum; even though all men (sic) have the intellect to construct ideas and learn, they do this sporadically and in a manner that cannot have a lasting effect. In the same way, according to Gramsci, people might cook or sew, however this does not make them into chefs or tailors. On the contrary, museum curators and educators or, at a higher

level, cultural policy makers, play the role of systematically organising knowledge and the ways it is communicated. For Gramsci,

Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function, not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields (Gramsci, 1971; 5).

Nevertheless, Gramsci does not treat all intellectuals in the same way. The strength of his argument lies in that he does not describe them as a static group. Rather, he speaks about the role they play as the organising ideological element of each era. Further, he differentiates traditional from organic intellectuals: traditional intellectuals act 'for a whole phase of history', regarding themselves as an autonomous and independent social group, distinct and separate from the ruling class and ideology. Traditional intellectuals are those whose positions were created during economic and historical conditions of the past; those instrumental for the success of an older hegemonic project. They claim to be part of a historical continuity which connects them to other intelligentsia in the past and future, despite socio-historical conditions. For Gramsci, this is a false belief, since most of the times traditional intellectuals tend to be conservative and in alliance with the dominant group.

On the other hand, the organic intellectuals are those who grow organically within a social group, in order to lead the hegemonic project. It is their organisational function within the economic, cultural and political sphere that sets them apart from traditional intellectuals. Organic intellectuals offer ideological leadership, as well as use the apparatuses of the state and the public sphere in order to articulate and implement the hegemonic project of this group. Bauman has described them as,

...those intellectuals who articulated the worldview, interests, intentions and historically determined potential of a particular class; who elaborated the values which needed to be promoted for such a potential to be fully developed; and who legitimised the historical role of a given class, its claim to power and to the management of the social process in terms of those values (1992; 1).

Thinking in museum terms, the role of traditional intellectuals can be attributed to those curators and scholars who, by classifying knowledge and legitimising a certain kind of morality, operated as the guardians of museums as spaces of distinction. According to Gramsci, traditional

intellectuals, whilst separate from the organic, are under the latter's constant influence and efforts of assimilation. This means that the organic intellectuals do not only act as the organising ideological element of the new hegemonic project, but attempt to incorporate traditional intellectuals under their guidance and influence. Even though there are no clear boundaries between traditional and organic intellectuals, Gramsci points out towards the struggle between ideas and spheres of influence of the old and the new dominant forces.

This enables us to think about recent developments in policy for museums in a different way, with attention to the role of organic intellectuals organising the theoretical framework of the new, post-modern museum, and with the intention of exploring their roles. Do they constitute part of a hegemonic or a counter-hegemonic project? Williams argues that hegemony is characterised by 'equilibrium, persuasion, consent and consolidation' (1960; 591): hegemony is about a constant process of struggle, negotiation and re-negotiation. Thus, instead of thinking about stable systems of reproduction, Gramsci's work describes a society where the struggle between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic strategies is continuous (Jackson Lears, 1985).

In *The organisation of education and culture* (1971), Gramsci argues:

For the learner is not a passive and mechanical recipient, a gramophone record - even if the liturgical conformity of examinations sometimes makes him appear so. The relation between these educational forms and the child's psychology is always active and creative....Undoubtedly the child of a traditionally intellectual family acquires the psycho-physical adaptation more easily. Before he ever enters the classroom he has numerous advantages over his comrades, and is already in possession of attitudes learnt from his family environment (Gramsci, 1971; 42).

For Gramsci, education works on legitimating its imperatives and securing particular modes of authority. Education is one of the main vehicles that construct common sense and consent. Gramsci does not believe in any sort of neutral socialisation. For him, 'every relationship of hegemony is necessarily an educational relationship' (1971; 350). Thinking in Gramscian terms, it is necessary to recognise the ways culture is related to power, education and agency; to acknowledge the politics of persuasion (Giroux, 2000). The importance of this concept is critical: it defines the field of current cultural politics and conflicts, where the media, information and communication technologies, leisure centres, museums and other cultural

institutions have re-discovered the power of representation, by shaping self and group identities and defining the different conceptions of community and belonging.

Gramsci is clear about the central focus of the educational process: the learner has to be motivated to achieve self-knowledge, self-mastery and thus liberation. This process would build on the agent's prior experience and enlarge one's perception of the social world (Forgacs, 1998). As Giroux proposes:

The concept of the teacher as learner suggests that teachers must help students critically appropriate their own histories but also must look critically at their own role as oppositional public intellectuals, located within specific cultural formations and relations of power. Gramsci not only argues implicitly against forms of authoritarian teaching, he sharply criticises the assumption that knowledge should be treated unproblematically—beyond the dynamics of interrogation, criticism and political engagement (2000; 124).

Gramsci argues for self-knowledge, but not a narrowly individualised self-knowledge; instead, he talks about awareness and criticism, the ability to think, to take an active part in the creation of history¹. Theorising museums in Gramscian terms suggests an investigation of their educational potential, not only to integrate contemporary knowledges of diverse cultures in the traditional body of knowledge, but to criticise the power relations, the dominant and the dominated, as they currently appear. This would not merely be a matter of allowing the expression of views of 'the other' — 'a participation from below imposed from above' (Fine quoted in Barr, 2005)— but a radical re-ordering of the kinds of knowledge and culture that 'count'. Gramsci argues for 'an open debate on the aims of education and the values on which educational action is based in a given society' (Monasta, 1993; 609). This research explores the extent to which museums are or can become vehicles of an open debate in relation to cultural artefacts and the values they represent.

¹ 'In other words, is it better to take part in a conception of the world mechanically imposed by the external environment, i.e. by one of the many social groups in which everyone is automatically involved from his entry into the conscious world? Or on the other hand, is it better to work consciously and critically of one's own conception of the world and thus, in connection with the labours of one's own brain, choose one's sphere of activity, take an active part in the creation of the world, be one's own guide, refusing to accept passively and supinely from outside the moulding of one's personality?' (Gramsci, 1971; 323-4).

b. Cultural studies: the contribution of Raymond Williams

Raymond Williams's writings on culture and adult education in Britain have been instrumental in this research. Indeed, his work has been central in the sense that it embodies the link between adult education and cultural studies (and *ipso facto*, museum studies) (see Barr, 2005). Williams comments on issues pertinent for the analysis of adult education in museums, such as the notion of 'the selective tradition' and suggests a distinction between dominant, emergent and residual cultural forms. He also contextualises hegemony in the framework of contemporary questions regarding the relation of education and culture. According to him, class is lived as a 'structure of feeling' (Williams, 1961); it is about being and becoming 'classed' (Skeggs, 1996; 162).

Williams's central focus of analysis is his dissatisfaction with the two major traditions in the study of culture. On the one hand, he rejects Eliot's and Leavis's tradition of preserving a minority of great works of art against the polluting commercialisation of popular culture (McIlroy, 1993). On the other, for Williams, the Marxist tradition of reducing culture to false consciousness constrains popular education and democracy and limits the working class to an ever-lasting inferior role. Against both traditions he asserts that 'a culture is not only a body of intellectual and imaginative work, it is also and essentially a whole way of life' (Williams 1961; 312). In one of his most famous papers, *Culture is ordinary* (1958), Williams explains:

We use the word culture in these two senses: to mean a whole way of life —the common meanings; to mean the arts and learning —the special processes of discovery and creative effort. Some writers reserve the word for one or the other senses; I insist on both, and on the significance of their conjunction. The questions I ask about our culture are questions about our general and common purposes, yet also questions about deep personal meanings. Culture is ordinary, in every society and in every mind (1958, reprinted 2001; 8).

Williams's argument has central importance for the methodology developed, the methods applied and for the analysis of the findings in this research. Even though he acknowledges the direct impact of the economic system on culture ('a culture is a whole way of life, and the arts are part of a social organisation which economic change clearly radically affects', *ibid*; 14), he does not accept the maxim of false consciousness, a state of mass-ignorance leaving working-class people excluded. According to Steele (1997), in contrast to the 'old humanist' tradition of education as a minority pursuit and the 'industrial trainers' who saw education as increasingly vocational and skills orientated, adult education, for Williams, enabled people to think in a critical manner, a

pursuit 'even more important with the advent of mass democratic society' (Steele, 1997; 184). Williams was soon to turn his interest into examining the effects of media, the 'literary' and the 'cultural turn' (Steele, 1997; 192).

Williams fiercely denies the relation of popular education to commercial culture; he argues that, like culture, education is ordinary as well: 'that it is, before everything else, the process of giving to the ordinary members of society its full common meanings, and the skills that will enable them to amend these meanings, in the light of their personal and common experience' (2001; 20). For Williams, artistic culture and popular culture (meaning, of the people) are mutually dependent. Everyone has a role to play in forming them and defining what they mean. Insisting on the differentiation of art from everyday life equates to missing out of an inherent ordinariness, the wellspring of all art (Barr, 2005). Williams demands 'more and more active public provision for the arts and adult learning' (2001; 22). Above all, Williams asks for retaining the spark and transforming energy of education; an education that accepts that, even though its language might change, people's voice remains central in educational pursuits.

In *Base and Superstructure* (1973), Williams deals with the complexity of the notion of hegemony. He shows how Gramsci devised a conceptual framework that would encompass the saturating impact of a common-sensical consciousness, lying deeper than ideology and pre-defining people's understanding of social reality. He further elaborates hegemony by introducing his notion of 'the selective tradition':

We can only understand an effective and dominant culture if we understand the real social process on which it depends: I mean the process of incorporation...there is a process which I call the *selective tradition*: that which, within the terms of an effective dominant culture, is always passed off as 'the tradition', 'the significant past'. But always the selectivity is the point; the way in which from a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings and practices are neglected and excluded (1973; 9).

Williams's proposition of the selective tradition is of central importance in this study. Most exhibition narratives are the products of a selective, rather than collective, memory. Indeed, no story is constructed without the workings of a selective mind —this study itself was based on specific selections. However, it is the *content* chosen that is the case in point. Which versions of history are presented and which are absent? Does the pre-occupation with learning rather than

education in museums suggest that such questions have become less important? What are the reasons for this?

Indeed, the new, post-museum has successfully brought together a broad range of cultures and people's histories. Most museums are not merely the repositories of the past. Nevertheless, hegemony is not a static system. It is not a thing of the past or of steadily declining elite traditions. Instead, it entails an active process which constantly adjusts and incorporates alternative meanings and elements, old and fresh ideas. According to Williams, 'their existence within the incorporation is recognisable by the fact that, whatever the degree of internal conflict or internal variation, they do not in practice go beyond the limits of the central effective and dominant definition' (1973; 10).

Williams differentiates alternative from oppositional ideas: the latter do not just see the world under a new light —they set out to change it. In fact, he suggests a tripartite distinction of dominant, residual and emergent forms as a useful framework for a cultural analysis. Residual forms, according to him, are the experiences, meanings and values 'of some previous social residue' (1973; 11); the dominant forms encapsulate the selective tradition, the hegemonic project of the dominant culture; finally, the emergent forms are the oppositional voices, described by Gramsci as the 'counter-hegemonic' project.

Reality, however, is not as cleat-cut as theory might suggest. Williams maintains that the present dominant culture is alert to emergent voices and able to incorporate them much more readily than in the past. Similarly, residual elements of past cultural practices are also likely to be quickly incorporated 'if the effective dominant culture is to make sense in those areas' (1973; 11). Indeed, the post-modern museum has been successful in bringing together diverse, both old and new, voices and in incorporating them. Therefore, rather than constructing strict categories of analysis, Williams stresses the fluidity of culture and the dynamic interrelationship of these processes; indeed, he emphasises the constant need for change for the dominant culture, 'if it is still to be felt as in real ways central in all our many activities and interests' (1973; 11). As will be discussed later, this framework has been particularly helpful in interpreting the directions of some of the diverse forces within the museum field.

2. Pierre Bourdieu: habitus, cultural and social capital and the field

a. Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) on education

In any given social formation the cultural arbitrary which the power relations between the groups or classes making up that social formation put into the dominant position within the system of cultural arbitrariness, is the one which most fully, though always indirectly, expresses the objective interests (material and symbolic) of the dominant groups or classes (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; 9).

For Bourdieu and Passeron, museums, as educational institutions, are the establishments *par excellence* which construct, represent and communicate the dominant 'cultural arbitrary'. Through their educational practices, they contribute to the symbolic reproduction of relations of power, by securing and maintaining the cultural domination of one or more social groups over others. The means for this is the legitimising representation and imposition, through pedagogical processes, of the 'cultural arbitrary'; that is, the 'significant' culture (Williams, 1973).

Bourdieu and Passeron argue that education, 'as a system of schemes of perception, appreciation, thought and action, historically constituted and socially conditioned' (1977), begins in one's family background and reaches full maturity through a conforming, 'common-sensical' socialisation in compulsory schooling. They maintain that schools legitimate this sort of pedagogical process through the linked ideologies of equality of opportunity and achievement, based on the criteria of merit alone; that is, they ignore the social conditions determining their dispositions. Since excellence and academic achievement are defined in terms of the selection of a specific cultural paradigm, imposed by the dominant ideology, it follows that the groups specifying it will necessarily be more academic than those distant from it. As a consequence, the 'subordinate' class have fewer demands for their education, thus creating a double reproduction of domination: as a legitimate educational process based on notions of academic merit; and as a legitimate class position in a system of social relations.

A vicious circle is created. Initial inequalities are intensified and relations of power sanctified. Even though Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) focus their analysis on compulsory schooling, their ideas have a significant impact on understanding educational processes in non-formal

educational environments, like the museum. Issues invoked as free admission, accessibility or publicity in museums arguably do not address the real question of the reasons of exclusion. However, the encouragement of visitors to construct their own meanings can work only with individuals who are prepared to be affected in that way. Taking Bourdieu and Passeron's argument further, the effectiveness of bringing the museum artefacts to the people, if they cannot make people come to them, is doubtful. It is interesting how contemporary these ideas seem, since this notion of 'outreach', either through physical or electronic (digital collections etc.) means, is one of the main goals of national and local authority museums today.

For social destiny to be changed into free vocation or personal merit...it is necessary and sufficient that the School, 'the hierophant of Necessity', should succeed in convincing individuals that *they* have *themselves* chosen or won the destinies which social destiny has assigned to them in advance....the School today succeeds, with the ideology of natural 'gifts' and innate 'tastes', in *legitimizing the circular reproduction of social hierarchies and educational hierarchies*....Thus, the most hidden and most specific function of the educational system consists in hiding its objective function, that is, *masking the objective truth of its relationship to the structure of class relations*.... In a society in which the obtaining of social privileges depends more and more closely on possession of academic credentials, the School does not only have the function of ensuring discreet succession to a bourgeois estate which can no longer be transmitted directly and openly. This privileged instrument of the bourgeois sociodicy which *confers on the privileged the supreme privilege of not seeing themselves as privileged* manages the more easily to convince the disinherited that they owe their scholastic and social destiny to *their* lack of gifts or merits, because *in matters of culture absolute dispossession excludes awareness of being dispossessed* (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977; 210, my emphasis).

The above analysis occupies a central position in the argument developed in this study. Even though the absence of individual agency may appear as over-deterministic, nonetheless it is especially in the sphere of culture and the arts where 'understanding' and 'appreciation' are primarily thought to derive from some form of unevenly distributed talent, gift or inherent 'need'. On the other hand, museums and galleries' adherence to the art historical canon serves to legitimise the idea of some having a taste for the arts while others do not. However, what are the possibilities for a non-formal curriculum reaching out to those failed by formal education? Could a different kind of learning, based on creativity and popular culture, offer opportunities for meaningful educational engagement?

b. Habitus and misrecognition

Bourdieu's central focus of analysis is the *habitus*, translated often by the English-speaking world as 'culture'. Habitus could be summarised as all those subjective beliefs and expectations formed under the objective reality of one's social position (Bourdieu, 1990; 52). It is the dialectic between objective and incorporated structures; the embodiment of one's social conditions of upbringing, education, occupation and culture into the essence of who we are, the way we stand, talk, eat, what we like and dislike. Even though Bourdieu stresses the significance of material conditions defining one's existence, each 'habitualised' belief or practice is also a matter of subjective disposition. Indeed, Bourdieu argues against the 'fetishism of social laws' or reducing history to a 'process without a subject' (1990; 41).

Habitus is based on the misrecognition (*méconnaissance*) of the existing power relations as legitimate; it suggests the acceptance of existing conditions of subordination as given. Indeed, the concepts of 'doxa' and misrecognition (Bourdieu, 1990) occupy a central place in Bourdieu's theoretical work. 'Doxa', for him, is a term for the taken-for-granted knowledge, a preconscious understanding which allows actors to have a sense of some practical ideas and modes of engagement prior to entering the museum or any other 'field'. Misrecognition is not simply a falsified understanding of reality; it is the pre-condition of any kind of recognition, since, according to Bourdieu, there is no position of absolute objectivity when interpreting reality. For instance, visitors' misrecognitions at the exhibition place could relate to their undisputable acceptance of certain works of art as more significant than others. 'Doxa' is not orthodoxy; it is not what we believe is right when others might dispute it. It is a belief beyond any challenge — 'the way things are'. Therefore, misrecognitions are at the heart of our beliefs about the world, a state of mind that secures orientation to action (Bourdieu, 1990).

Nonetheless, habitus is more than the sum of mis-recognitions that match individuals' dispositions to certain positions in the social order. Its deeper meaning lies in its function as the meeting point between institutions and agents; 'it is the basic way in which each person as a biological being connects with socio-cultural order in such a way that the various games of life keep their meaning, keep being played' (Calhoun, 1995; 13). In other words, museum visitors' habitualised ideas regarding exhibitions and hierarchies of civilisations and cultures are not only a matter of inculcation, but also a belief that they must actively claim — an appropriation. The

actions of museum visitors in the exhibition space —keeping silent, moving slowly, refraining from touching— keep the ‘game’ going, reproducing its specific rules and momentum through their actions. This is what Bourdieu and Darbel mean when they claim that keen art gallery visitors have a ‘feel for the game’ (1991). According to Prior,

This feel is expressed in a form which emphasises its natural, quasi-instinctual and pre-reflexive quality, in the dispositional form of the cultural habitus, itself an expression of favourable material conditions of existence (1999; 65).

For Bourdieu, one is born in the game, with the game; *habitus* is ‘a virtue made of necessity’, ‘to refuse what is already denied and to will the inevitable’ (1984; 175).

Bourdieu’s theory of the habitus can potentially offer a way of thinking at the meso-level of a modernist analysis with a post-modernist sensitivity in regard to individual agency and its particularities. In order to examine visitors’ and non-visitors’ tendencies, preferences and beliefs, it is important for research not to be limited to a superficial examination of the kind used in ‘life-style’ surveys: such surveys attribute social tendencies to people’s choices, as if these are made on an equal plane. Therefore, habitus gives the researcher an added heuristic instrument, in order to think about and explore the conditions of the visitors’ participation and learning experiences in greater depth. The emergence of heightened interest and elaboration in Bourdieu’s work is therefore invaluable in an endeavour, if not to identify and analyse visitors’ habituses in their integrity, at least to give indications of what seems as beliefs and habits acquired through social status and stratification.

Nevertheless, could the notion of habitus be too reductionist a way of examining social diversity in the current multicultural world? Is Bourdieu’s *Distinction* (1984) too rooted in place (France) and time (1960s) to have contemporary relevance? Bourdieu’s analytical tools were applied in the closed society of Kabyle in Algeria and produced a theoretical construct to explain the community’s social and cultural practices. Can they be applied to contemporary museums, whose urban ethnography brings together a diversity of communities, hence habituses? Sociologists have claimed that the notion of habitus is deterministic, for it places more emphasis on structural conditions, while others criticised Bourdieu for failing to give an adequate

explanation of social change (Jenkins, 1992)². I will return to discuss further criticisms of his work in the last section of this chapter.

c. Cultural and Social Capital

Bourdieu's concepts of the cultural and social capital have been very influential in contemporary sociological theory. Both constitute part of his broader theory regarding the social structuring of taste. Nevertheless, the notion of cultural capital has received sharp critique mostly by American literature (Lamont and Lareau, 1988; Lamont 1992; Lamont et al, 1996; Erikson, 1996; Halle; 1993), whereas other research still finds in it analytical attributes which seem most effective (Holt 1997; 1997b; Warde et. al., 2000).

Bourdieu sees cultural capital as implicated in the reproduction of class privilege. Cultural capital, according to him (1986), exists in three fashions: its *embodied* form, expressed through the habitual tendencies of the body and the mind; its *objectified* form, as one would measure it in cultural goods possessed (books, paintings etc); and in its *institutionalised* form, as shown through educational qualifications acquired. In terms of museum visiting, it denotes the ensemble of 'cultivated dispositions' that constitutes the schemes of appreciation and understanding in the gallery space.

One of Bourdieu's major arguments in *Distinction* (1984) is that the tastes presented by different social groups and the lifestyles associated with them are opposed to one another; 'taste is first and foremost the distaste of the tastes of others' (Wacquant, 2000; 115). In order to uncover the social logic of cultural capital and the subsequent habits it defines, it is necessary not to link it direct to a social group, but contextualise it in the social space of the habitual practices of groups in relation to each other. In other words, what are the possibilities of working-class people enjoying high art when, in their minds, it is associated with an upper-class audience? Equally, why do intellectuals criticise museums' efforts for exhibitions directed to the wider public as 'dumbing-down' approaches?

² In contrast, Bridget Fowler argues: 'It is paradoxical that Bourdieu's social theory has come under attack for its alleged determinism and pessimism when it has always gone under the banner of a 'constructivist structuralism'' (2000; 1).

According to Bourdieu, art galleries present a test for most people; afraid of revealing lack of knowledge or appreciation, they are mostly concerned not to give themselves away. They feel 'out of place'. Standing in front of the works of the 'great masters', they admire what art history has legitimated as 'canonical' culture. Schooling fails to create transferable dispositions for a critical posture towards the art works, or, according to Bourdieu, 'the school system, which simply sees all pupils as being equal in rights and duties, usually does no more than intensify and sanction initial cultural inequalities' (Bourdieu, 1984; 68). Barr suggests that,

In fact, many people who feel comfortable in museums, the typical visitor perhaps, actually know very little about the objects on display. However, because they have the crucial understanding of how galleries and museums work, this enables them to feel they belong. They may even resist better displays of information, seeing this as patronising, precisely...because it threatens their privileged position (2005; 108).

Bourdieu argues that in reality there are no cultivated people but cultivated pleasures acquired by systematic exercise and habit. Essentially, when cultural 'needs' are prescribed by the results of visitor surveys, one does not only ignore the social conditions forming these opinions in the first place; more crucially, one rejects the possibility of finding out about any alternative or oppositional expression of the interests of the disadvantaged. Hence, attitudinal surveys base their findings on a sort of nature-culture thought to be 'deserved', without looking at the pre-determining social conditions. In fact, Bourdieu and Darbel argue that museums reinforce 'for some the feeling of belonging and for others the feeling of exclusion':

...the privileged classes of bourgeois society replace the difference between two cultures, products of history reproduced by education, with the basic difference between two natures: one nature naturally cultivated, and another nature naturally natural. Thus, the sanctification of culture and art, this 'currency of the absolute' which is worshipped by a society enslaved to the absolute of currency, fulfils a vital function by contributing to the consecration of the social order (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991; 110).

Moving on to Bourdieu's analysis of other forms of capital, *social* capital is the existence of a network of connections, 'the lasting, useful relationships that can secure material and symbolic profits' (Bourdieu, 1986; 52). According to him,

The network of relationships is the product of investment strategies, individual or collective, consciously or unconsciously aimed at establishing or reproducing social relationships that are directly usable in the short or the long term... the possessors of an inherited social capital, symbolised by a great name, are able to transform all circumstantial relationships into lasting connections. They are sought after for their social capital and,

because they are well-known, are worthy of being known ('I know him well'); they do not need to 'make the acquaintance' of all their 'acquaintances'; they are known to more people than they know, and their work of sociability, when it is exerted, is highly productive (1986; 52).

The notion of social capital is broadly applied today, not only because of Bourdieu but other theorists as well, like Jacobs (1961) and Coleman (1988). Putnam (1993), for example, uses it to speak about partnerships and community building. In the museum sphere, the notion of social capital can be used to understand those social relations that bring people to museums or, on the contrary, discourage them from going altogether. Museum visiting is often a shared activity; our social networks and friends very often determine if and what kind of museums we are visiting.

Following Bourdieu's logic, the higher the economic, cultural and social capital, the greater the chances one would have of visiting museums and learning through their displays. His hypothesis has been confirmed by other research as well (DiMaggio 1987; 1992). Is there such a systematic hierarchy of taste and distinction in the museums in Dundee? The research findings and their interpretation will attempt to find some answers to this question.

d. Field

The museum 'field', occupied by minimal use-value objects and practices is ruled by difference or distinction; in fact, the logic of positionality is what gives it meaning (Bourdieu, 1993). In other words, the positions occupied by the different agents in the field, their advances and withdrawals, relate to their efforts for distinction within this field as an expression of their professional, educational, or other interest. In terms of museum visitors, the distance of the world of art from everyday material reality requires a willingness to 'play the game of art'; that is, refrain from the economic necessity of everyday work. Agents are involved in constructing competing 'fields' within which their actions have meaning and receive recognition. In the museum field, or any other field according to Bourdieu (1993), people do not adopt different tastes as a post hoc interpretation of how these accord with or reflect their social conditions; they themselves actively take positions, trying to secure recognition within one field and at the same

time 'trading' access to a different field altogether (Robbins, 2000). This is what Bourdieu calls at a different instance, 'cultural goodwill', the cultural level of aspiration (Bourdieu, 1984)³.

The structure of the field is neither static, nor does it change in any systematic way. On the contrary, it is endlessly reformulated according to the agents' struggles for recognition and improvement of their situation. Agents use the force of their capital, economic, social or cultural, to raise their game and advance their front. Nevertheless, it is the *relational* nature of these advances that gives the field its explanatory significance; for example, when examined through Bourdieu's theoretical frame, the shifts in the professional hierarchies of curators and museum educators can be seen under a new light. Hence, a deeper understanding of the ensemble of the forces constituting the field assists in better contextualising it within other force-fields in society and history.

Within the field, the diversity, density and force of the actors' positioning and advancing needs to be taken into account as well. There is no system in the ways the agencies counteract and no explanation why some might remain stationary for longer. The field is not a solid entity; rather, it is part and parcel of wider constellations of fields in the game of power (Bourdieu, 1993). What seems like a persistent trend in the new, post-modern museum, is that the walls between the different field layers have become much more transparent; but are they more penetrable?

The challenge of researching such a dynamic assemblage of agents and practices, subjective and objective conditions and contextualising them within socio-historical developments is immense; indeed, fieldwork was to confirm this.

e. Bourdieu and Darbel's *The Love of Art* (1991)

First published in 1966, *The Love of Art* (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991) argues against the 'sacred frontier' which establishes high art as an autonomous realm. Bourdieu and Darbel demonstrate that aesthetic judgement is a social ability by virtue of both its genesis and its functioning. Their study offers not only a radical critique of social taste, but also an analysis of the relation between culture and power in art museums. Even though their research was conducted four decades ago,

³ A common example of this is visitors' responses to surveys regarding the frequency of their visits; most of the times they claim that they visit museums more often than they actually do.

the way that some of their findings and questions are still applicable in researching the sociology of taste and museum attendance is remarkable.

Bourdieu and Darbel formulate their hypothesis from the very beginning of the analysis:

When it is all a matter of disposition and predispositions —since there is no rational teaching of that which cannot be learned- how else can the conditions favourable to the awakening of potentialities which lie dormant within some people be created? Surely enquiring about the social or cultural characteristics of visitors already implies that they can be separated by other differences than those created by the arbitrary distribution of gifts? (1991; 2)

They argue against the ‘logic of predestination’, of a representation of culture based on an ‘innate education’. They devised a systematic survey of the European museum-going public, its social and educational background and its attitudes to museums and artistic preferences. Their findings suggest that museum visiting increases with the level of education, and it is ‘almost exclusively the domain of the cultivated classes’ (1991; 14). Apart from education, crucial factors of asserting the criteria for museum visiting are socio-economic class and geography.

Thus, speaking in Bourdieusian terms about museums today, it is essential to examine the likelihood social groups have, depending on their specific characteristics, to enter a museum. For example, Bourdieu and Darbel argue that undoubtedly, academics, teachers, art specialists or upper-class women visit museums more often than other groups. What about farmers for example? ‘It is necessary to point out, in addition to geographical distance, the disadvantaging influence of the cultural atmosphere characteristic of the rural community’ (1991; 17). Reducing admission charges, according to Bourdieu and Darbel, or claiming representation and social inclusion, according to the current museum rhetoric, will not decrease cultural inequalities or differences at the level of education and social position. Taking the argument further, linking art museums with tourism has the same effect, since tourism is not independent of occupation, income and therefore education. Bourdieu and Darbel argue that in spite of the importance of the relationship between the level of education and cultural practice, emphasis should be placed on the role of the family in securing cultural capital —the pre-determinant of any level of education.

Pace Bourdieu and Darbel,

Statistics show that access to cultural works is the privilege of the cultivated class; this privilege has all the outward appearances of legitimacy. In fact, only those who exclude themselves are ever excluded. Given that there is nothing more accessible than museums and the economic obstacles that can be seen at work in other spheres count for little here, it seems quite justified to invoke the natural inequality of 'cultural needs'. However, the self-destructive nature of this ideology is obvious. If it is indisputable that our society offers to all the *pure possibility* of taking advantage of the works on display in museums, it remains the case that only some have the *real possibility* of doing so. Aspiration to cultural practice varies in the same way that cultural practice does and 'cultural need' increases the more it is satisfied, the absence of practice being accompanied by an absence of awareness of this absence. The wish to take advantage of museums can be fulfilled as soon as it exists, so it must be concluded that such a wish only exists if it is being fulfilled. Objects are not rare, but the propensity to consume them is, that 'cultural need' which, in contrast to 'primary needs', is the result of education. It follows that inequalities with regard to cultural works are only one aspect of inequalities in school, which creates the 'cultural need' at the same time as it provides the means of satisfying it (1991; 37).

Similar rules apply to the appreciation of works of art, since, considered as symbolic goods, they exist only for those who have the means to decipher them. The mastery of such a classification system of distinctive stylistic characteristics is necessary in order to interpret, situate and connect works of art⁴. The unskilled, unfamiliar viewer cannot interpret works of art any further than understanding their primary meanings, tangible facts, their 'phenomenal state' of real objects. 'In order to "taste", that is "to differentiate and appreciate" the works on display and in order to understand them and give them value, the uncultivated visitor can only invoke the *quality* and *quantity* of the work put into them, with *moral respect* taking the place of aesthetic admiration' (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991; 47, my emphasis); hence the love for detail in realist art, respect for classical antiquities or, on the contrary, dislike of contemporary forms of art which might seem too abstract, ephemeral or too 'easy'. However, the significance given to certain works of art more than others is not the result of any objective rules of aesthetic quality, but the result of how and by whom art history was written in the second half of the 20th century. According to Robbins,

Objectified cultural capital is permanently potential, always dependent on the selections of individuals. *Institutionalised* cultural capital, by contrast, has an objective existence which is instrumental in constructing individuals. Institutions are consolidated social groups which have the power to prescribe or pre-empt the ways in which individuals might try to use objectivated cultural capital to modify their incorporated cultural capital (2000; 35).

⁴ Jauss' reception theory, applied to works of art, shows the complexities of their life after leaving the artist's studio: 'In effect, the value and status of a literary work are neither deducible from the biographical or historical circumstances of its conception, nor from the simple place which it occupies in the evolution of a genre but from criteria which are much more difficult to handle: the effect produced, its 'reception', the influence exercised, and the value recognised by posterity' (Robbins 2000, 52).

In museum terms, therefore, arguing that minorities are excluded due to their limited cultural capital is indeed right. However, the question remains regarding the forms of capital which become institutionalised —and thus legitimated— and those that do not. I would argue that it is museums themselves which legitimate and perpetuate the selective traditions of a very specific cultural baggage, the one carried by the dominant classes.

The above analysis has shown the reasons why the theoretical framework of Bourdieu and his collaborators has underpinned much of the analysis in this study. I will return to Bourdieu at the end of this chapter, in order to discuss the possible limitations of his theoretical propositions and the ways the latter were combined with the work of the other theorists.

3. Other theoretical resources

a. Habermas: the ‘colonisation of the lifeworld’ and ‘depth hermeneutics’

Habermas, one of the proponents of the later Frankfurt School of critical theory, sought to explore possible links between the politics of neo-conservatism and postmodernism. According to him, it is far from coincidental that the two most influential ideological shifts of the 1980s emerged and flourished in parallel (Habermas, 1989). He attempted to show how the technological sphere has penetrated the ‘lifeworld’, the sphere of everyday human life, and led to the emergence of ‘social pathologies’ (1984).

According to Habermas, instead of instrumental reason, it is intersubjectivity that lies at the root of the lifeworld; our everyday interactions are oriented towards reaching understanding (i.e. communicative reason). The ends-means rationality of functionalist reason is solely derived from the administrative sphere, resulting in what Habermas calls the ‘colonization of the lifeworld’ (Habermas, 1984). In other words, the dominant discourse prevailing in our everyday lives is an outcome-driven rationality; one that needs to be pragmatic and functional, if it is to operate smoothly.

Even though he acknowledges the contributions of modernity, such as the technical expertise, political justice and aesthetic experience, he also stresses the unequal development of the different spheres of public life and the inadequate realisation of what he calls modernity's 'normative potentials' (1989; 49). Habermas criticises those he calls 'neo-conservatives' because of their wish to preserve and expand the economic, technical and managerial spheres at the expense of any serious discussions about ethics and equality (1989); according to him, 'the neoconservatives see their role as, on the one hand, mobilising pasts that can be accepted approvingly and, on the other hand, morally neutralising other pasts that would provoke only criticism and rejection' (Habermas, 1989: 42).

Habermas claims that instrumental reason has gained predominance over the spheres of ethics and aesthetics. For him, the basis of the 'lifeworld' is intersubjectivity, not formal reason. However, his concept of 'the colonization of the lifeworld' refers to the ways functionalist rationality has dominated thinking around all aspects of social life, education and culture in particular. Habermas talks about the ways bureaucracies and markets coordinate their action irrespective of the norms of social life contained in institutions such as democracy, and therefore become increasingly cut off from lifeworld contexts. However, 'even as systems become "detached" from the lifeworld and operate according to the internal imperatives of money and power, they are still subjects to crisis and contestation, now including tendencies towards anomie, the fragmentation of life, the failure of the state to solve certain recurrent problems, breakdowns in socialization and much more' (Bohman, 1999; 70). Habermas's colonization thesis provides a very thoughtful explanation of the unintended outcomes of the advance of social systems such as markets, at the expense of others, such as the cultural lifeworld.

In *The New Obscurity: The Crisis of the Welfare State and the Exhaustion of Utopian Energies* (1986), Habermas describes the imperatives of contemporary cultural policy: firstly, intellectuals are to be discredited and accused of being obsessed with the notion of power; secondly, critical judgements and transformative praxis are seen as a threat to the quite stable operational society of social labour and the a-political public sphere; and finally, traditional values such as conventional morality, patriotism, folk culture are to be re-introduced.

Habermas proposes the return to a 'long revolution' (Williams, 1975). Triggered by the youth, green and peace movements unfolding around him, he suggests a shift from the 'old' politics of

bread-and-butter issues to a 'new politics' concerned with broader questions about ways of life (Outhwaite, 1994). His work on instrumentalism, neo-conservatism and postmodernism could explicate many of the dominant discourses on museum education.

Further, as discussed in the previous chapter, museums today have a great interest in the making of meaning (Roberts, 1997; Silverman, 1993), based on the constructivist (Hein, 1998) or the hermeneutic paradigm (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999). Habermas praises hermeneutic approaches for stressing the way in which language is perceived as constitutive of social and historical phenomena (Thompson, 1982). Even though the hermeneutic paradigm shares the anti-positivist sentiment of critical theory, for Habermas, in Gadamer's hermeneutics, language is considered the 'universal' medium of understanding and communication. Nonetheless, for Habermas, language is also a medium of domination. Manipulation and power structures systematically distort our capacity to communicate (Habermas, 1989).

According to Habermas, Gadamer's belief in the significance of pre-conceptions handed down by tradition, denies the interest in emancipation; agents appear passive, unable to reflect upon their prejudices and reject them. Habermas, on the contrary, stresses the significance of the concept of self-reflection, which comprises elements of reconstruction and critique. Rooting his empirical approach in linguistics, psychoanalysis and developmental psychology, Habermas moves from the paraphrase or translations of originally obscure meanings (hermeneutics), to the mastery of an explicit knowledge of 'deep' structures and processes ('depth hermeneutics') (McCarthy, 1982). Hermeneutics, by anchoring themselves to tradition, fail to see that history can and does work behind the backs of the individuals who make it (Sensat, 1979). According to Bernstein,

When this occurs a part of the symbolic field becomes either incomprehensible to the speakers involved, or they give it a comprehensibility it does not really possess (e.g. by 'rationalising' the inconsistency in question). Secondly, as a result of the habitualised inconsistency, communication becomes inhibited: on-verbal expressions, motives, desires, even doubts, uncertainties and 'felt' failures of understanding become incapable of being made verbal and thus communicated (1995; 45).

Therefore, in an argument that brings Bourdieusian claims to mind, 'habitualised' misunderstandings, or systematic incomprehension due to doubts and even insecurity (the 'museum test', for Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991) obscure agents' true participation in the making

of meaning. In this sense, if the communication of ideas in museums is distorted, there are voices which are systematically excluded from its discourse.

According to Ricoeur (1974; 1981), the root of the debate between Gadamer and Habermas lies deeper. Gadamer is connected with the school of hermeneutics that is associated primarily with theology (Thompson, 1982). On the contrary, Habermas belongs to a totally different 'tradition' altogether; drawing from influential thinkers such as Marx, Nietzsche and Freud, he was interested in tearing away masks, disclosing disguises, reveal false consciousnesses — a 'hermeneutics of suspicion' (Holub, 1991: 73). Thus, what this would entail in a museum educational context, is the interrogation of the object, the constant questioning of the historical package and meaning it carries, in order to reveal alternative, silenced and dormant, narratives and experiences. Rooted in a hermeneutics of suspicion, it would offer adults the opportunity to be active agents in the construction of their history, rather than merely participants involved in processes of interpretation. Indeed, Habermas's critical theory can contribute towards distinguishing what a symmetrical distribution of power in museums would entail, since the conditions for an 'ideal speech situation', i.e. consensus, are not at all linguistic but rather social and material.

Therefore, Habermas's depth hermeneutics has been the principal theory informing the choice of a critical ethnographic methodology of this research; as will be discussed in the next chapter, it is largely based on the Habermasian contribution.

b. Wenger's schema of engagement-imagination-alignment

In the final chapter of this thesis, I am suggesting Wenger's (1998; 2000) schema of the three different modes of belonging to 'communities of practice' as a point of departure for a radical museum education. Wenger suggests that, in order to make sense of educational experiences, it is useful to consider the tripartite process of *engagement*, *imagination* and *alignment*.

According to him, *engagement* involves the on-going negotiation of meaning constructed through own personal trajectories and unfolding histories. It is similar to the interpretation of exhibitions, however Wenger (1998) stresses its *bounded* character; in other words, people are only in one place at a time and spend a finite amount of hours on any activity. Museum visitors

are a prime example for the locatedness of learning in the exhibition space. In a sense, the bounded nature of engagement constitutes its greatest strength, since, especially in museums, it can bring visitors in close proximity with cultures and histories from afar. Nevertheless, the topicality of the experience could also be seen as a weakness, since it might act as an obstacle for the consideration of social phenomena excluded from the museum narrative.

Therefore, *imagination* — ‘creating images of the world and seeing connections through time and space by extrapolating from our own experience’ (Wenger, 1998; 173) — could act as an antidote to the limitations of engaging with a specific exhibition or educational programme at a specific time. Through the process of imagination, apart from constructing an image of ourselves, we ‘see’ our communities and the world in order to find a sense of direction, reflect on our own circumstances in relation to others and explore new possibilities. It is a process of expanding the self and transcending time and space, in order to connect individual stories with larger collectivities; this is how personal struggles can be transformed into public issues, as C. Wright Mills (1959) suggested. It is this kind of sociological imagination that Mills (1959) argued we need to apply if we are to have a more holistic sense of the world and our place in it.

Imagination, however, is not an individual project; fantasy and myth help create images of worlds alien from us, nevertheless, if constructed in an insular manner, they might also be disconnected and stereotypical. Wenger proposes imagination as a shared project of creating mutual visions of the world. Such a project does not assume any ideal conditions of sharing arguments and perceptions; it is a constant field of struggle, where multiple ways of expression and forms of argumentation are laid on the table, open to dialogue and processes of negotiation.

Finally, Wenger argues for *alignment*, a process of coordinating perspectives, interpretations and actions towards realising mutual goals. Alignment is the process of people gathering together, forming bridges and alliances, in order to play their part in the ‘bigger picture’. Because it is people-led and the product of the common processes of engagement and imagination, it strengthens hope and amplifies the sense of what is possible. Alignment is necessary for the focused efforts of social groups to achieve collective aims that span beyond one’s personal situation.

c. Hannah Arendt and Iris Marion Young: ‘storytelling’ or the art of the ‘political narrative’

Hannah Arendt was a German Jewish political theorist, whose work deals with the nature of power in relation to politics, authority and totalitarianism. She lived through the Nazi years in Germany and was prevented from teaching in German universities because she was Jewish. Having been interrogated by Gestapo, she fled to France and eventually emigrated to the United States. Arendt’s main contribution was the affirmation of a conception of freedom which is synonymous with collective political action amongst equals.

Iris Marion Young, on the other hand, worked in a more contemporary context as a Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago, researching political theory, feminist social theory and normative analysis of public policy. *Inclusion and Democracy* (2000) is one of her most cited works and the one which was of particular analytical relevance to this study. In this section, I am going to briefly introduce Arendt’s notion of storytelling and Young’s idea about the political narrative; both concepts have been useful in delineating the pedagogical tools for a more collective and critical education in museums, as it was suggested by the research participants.

According to Arendt, ‘living beings, men and animals, are not just in the world, they are *of* the world, and this precisely because they are objects and subjects —perceiving and being perceived— at the same time’ (1978; 20, my emphasis). Having a place in the world means having a site from where one is to form their understanding and share their *opinion* about it. For Arendt, *opinion* is the very essence of politics and should not be confused with preferences and needs —what dominates current museum educational theory and practice. Arendt asserts:

The fundamental deprivation of human rights is manifested first and above all in the *deprivation of a place in the world which makes opinions significant and actions affective*. Something much more fundamental than freedom and justice, which are rights of citizens, is at stake when belonging to the community into which one is born is no longer a matter of course and not belonging no longer a matter of choice, or when one is placed in a situation where, unless he commits a crime, his treatment by others does not depend on what he does or does not do. This extremity, and nothing else, is the situation of people deprived of human rights. They are deprived, not of the right of freedom, but of the *right to action*; not of the right to think whatever they please, but of the *right to opinion* (1951; 296, my emphasis).

Arendt argues against stereotypical attitudes towards certain social groups, who, even though they might be free to have a view, can find no place in the world to voice it; these people that, unless they commit a crime, wander invisible in a world that acknowledges them as living beings but deprives them of the right to be citizens, the right to form, voice, influence opinion and act upon it. She distinguishes between the nineteenth century 'revolt' against the authority of tradition and the twentieth 'break' with tradition. According to Arendt, the events of the twentieth century have created a 'gap' between past and future of such a magnitude that the past, while still present, is fragmented and can no longer be told as a unified narrative. Benhabib, one of Arendt's students, writes:

This recovery of the past must proceed and cannot but proceed outside the framework of established tradition, for tradition no longer reveals the meaning of the past. But to be without a sense of the past is to lose one's self, one's identity, for who we are is revealed in the narratives we tell of ourselves and of our world shared with others. Narrativity is constructive of identity (1996;92).

Narrative, then, or to use Arendt's term, *storytelling*, is a fundamental human activity. Thus, there is a continuum between the attempt of the theorist to understand the past and the need of the acting person to interpret the past as part of a coherent and continuing life story. But what guides the activity of the storyteller when tradition has ceased to orient? Arendt speaks about an 'enlarged mentality' (Benhabib, 1996); to have a 'perspectivity' of the world, to grasp and consider the many points of view through which a matter must be seen and evaluated. This capacity is not empathy, in that it does not mean 'feeling with others', but signifies instead a cognitive ability to 'think with others'. For Arendt, judgement requires the moral-cognitive capacities for 'worldliness', that is, an interest in the world and in the human beings who constitute the world, and a firm grasp of where one's own boundaries lie and where those of others begin. Nevertheless,

Given the heterogeneity of human life and the complexity of social structures and interaction, however, the effort to shape arguments according to shared premises within shared discursive frameworks sometimes excludes the expression of some needs, interests and suffering of injustice, because these cannot be voiced with the operative premises and frameworks (Young, 2000; 37).

Moving to Young, 'articulateness' (2000; 38) involves norms of speaking that are the privilege of highly educated people and in which the majority of the population could never participate.

According to her, 'the speech culture of women, radicalised or ethnicized minorities, and working class people...often is, or is perceived to be, more excited and embodied, values more the expression of emotion, uses figurative language, modulates tones of voice, and gestures widely' (2000; 39). Young proposes the use of 'political narrative' as an idea that, against the limitedness and normativity of an ideal public sphere as the one Habermas suggested, promotes what she calls 'emancipatory politics':

A conception of public which in principle excludes no persons, aspects of people's lives or topic of discussion and which encourages aesthetic as well as discursive expression. In such a public, consensus and sharing may not always be the goal, but the recognition and appreciation of differences, in the context of confrontation with power (Young, 1994; 76).

4. Theory and research framework: emerging questions

It now becomes possible to sketch an outline of the present inquiry on the educational role of the museum, on the basis of a synthesis of the theoretical contributions discussed above. The intention so far has been to show how these different sources illuminate and frame the questions this study set for itself, as well as signpost their implications for the methodological choices that shaped the research design.

In other words, how does the proposed theoretical framework assist in analysing the adult education opportunities in the museums under consideration, the values underlying them and the kinds of curricula that determine their content and pedagogies? Second, how does the theoretical framework help understand the impact of educational programming of the museums under consideration on their visitors? Is, for example, Bourdieu's theory on capitals still useful in the analysis of what and how adults learn in the museum? Finally, how can the specific theoretical framing of this research account for oppositional voices and practices in educational work in museums?

To begin with, we must acknowledge criticisms on Bourdieu's work, despite its wide-spread recognition and impact. Jenkins, for example, refutes the claims that the binary distinctions between objectivism and subjectivism in Bourdieu's work can be overcome and stresses the determinism of his notions of the habitus and misrecognition (1990). Indeed, Bourdieu's 'economism' in relation to the theory of capitals (Evens, 1999) has also been criticised as reductionist (Sayer, 1999), since it does not leave any place for the disinterested judgement.

The notion of habitus determines most of what agents can accomplish according to the distribution of capitals: it follows a logic of allocation which does not allow enough room for agency. Alexander has strongly criticised Bourdieu for 'his continuing commitment not only to a cultural form of Marxist thought but to significant strains in the very traditions he is fighting against' (1995; 130). Nevertheless, Bourdieu does not set out to fight against specific traditions; on the contrary, he argues against simple oppositions and shows how learning from many different perspectives can enrich what he called a 'socio-analysis' (1990; 20).

Gramsci on the other hand, has also been criticised for 'credible inconsistencies' (McInnes, 1971; 15), the most profound of which is his educational conservatism, incongruent with his political radicalism. Indeed, despite his revolutionary political and social theory, Gramsci's prescriptions in regard to the content and processes of schooling have been criticised as conservative (Entwistle, 1979). Inconsistencies are also to be found between his early work, displaying 'a good deal of dogmatic radical rhetoric with reference to schools, and the much more tentative and open conclusions of his mature work' (Entwistle, 1979; 4).

Finally, Habermas's study of the public sphere has received sharp criticism, debate and analysis. Critics concentrate on his idealisation of the earlier bourgeois public sphere by presenting it as a forum of rational discussion and deliberation, even though it was hermetically closed for the participation of certain groups. The normative aura of his work has sparked fiery debate regarding who actually controlled the bourgeois public sphere; that is, mainly white, property-owning males (Kellner, online, 2006). Indeed, Habermas acknowledged that 'from the beginning a dominant bourgeois public collides with a plebeian one' (1992; 430) and that he 'underestimated' the importance of counter-public spheres. From a feminist perspective, Meehan (1995) has argued against Habermas for deriving his inspiration from Enlightenment political theory—long rejected by feminist critics.

Indeed, I would argue that it is in the absence of gender analysis that the weakness of the above theoretical sources lies; their worlds are constructed on the basis of an examination of structure and agency, which does not leave enough space for a gender perspective. The theoretical tools discussed are tailored towards examining social reality from a single vista, that of a class-stratified, male-dominated world. Having constructed the theoretical framework on the basis of the dominant trends in museum education, its application for the analysis of educational

practices in the museum had therefore been considered suitable. Nonetheless, examining the workings of hegemony or the habitus in participants' narrations in the field, even though valuable, sometimes did appear to be missing out on issues such as memory, the social self as this often unfolds at education sessions, or women's more limited opportunities to pursue leisure activities (especially ethnic women). The theoretical tools used were sometimes not sufficient to explain educational processes that did not seek for factual knowledge but expressed more personal and subtle experiences in men's and women's interactions with the exhibitions and each other. In other words, as we shall see, learning in the museum seemed often to be connected by interviewees with emotion, rather than the rational explanation of casual and dialectic relationships.

Despite the above limitations, bringing the above theoretical resources together offers a useful framework for the analysis of the educational policies and practices of the museums and galleries in Dundee. In order to understand the structure of the field of museum education, one has to relate it back to civil society and its blurred boundaries with the state, social class and the market. I would claim that it is precisely within the contradictions arising from museums' contested traditions that we need to locate our thinking and analysis; to be 'in and against the museum', in order to examine the diverse forces in the contested museum space. The theoretical propositions analysed above are used as resources, in order to illuminate the disparities between social justice and social inclusion, democracy and the market and raise questions about the hidden polarities in the educational role museums are assigned to play.

Habermas's depth hermeneutics, together with the theoretical constructs of Gramsci and Bourdieu ask new questions regarding education in museums. Suppose the consensus that forms cultural heritage at any given time is not the product of uninhibited discussion and expression of mutual understanding (Habermas), but the result of hegemony (Gramsci) and distinction (Bourdieu)? For contemporary museum education theory, understanding is primarily derived from people's encounter and interaction with the displays. In focusing on learning processes rather than educational content, however, do museum educators ignore the ideological function certain pedagogies may have in maintaining the status quo and a partial presentation of history?

According to Bourdieu, both the processes of distinction and consensus, are intensified through a conforming, 'common-sensical' socialisation in formal education. Nonetheless, what is the

case with informal education, such as that offered in museums? What are the implications of the co-ordination of all museums' educational activities with a curriculum formed by the dominant 'cultural arbitrary'? Do museums sustain or challenge the dominant 'knowledge code' and class positionings through their educational practice? What are the similarities and differences between a set curriculum in formal education and the more free-ranging learning experiences of visitors in museums? In their organised educational offer to younger people and adult groups, can museums challenge the selective traditions of the dominant museum curricula?

The concepts of habitus and the cultural capital have been the most central in the examination of the complex matrix of factors affecting the museum experience. Due to its fluid interpretations, cultural capital is not quantifiable on single scales. As is discussed in the next chapter, the combination of the quantitative and qualitative research strands is expected to give a more holistic understanding of the correlation between structures and individual agency in regard to educational opportunities in museums. Taking the comparative dimension of the study into account, one is able to examine which groups of the population visit which museums or galleries; the reasons for the emerging pattern are explored through the qualitative strand of the research. Further, adding other factors in the equation, like gender, age or ethnicity, can enlighten our understandings of the workings of the different capitals in innovative ways, ways that build on Bourdieu's idea but also move beyond the class-determined analysis.

On the other hand, Gramsci's political theory of education is very close to Paulo Freire's basic tenet that 'all true education investigates thinking' (Allman, 1988; 93). Similar to Gramsci, Freire challenges dominant ideologies and proposes education for liberation, where teachers and learners work together to understand and control existing knowledge and create new truths—the way Gramsci describes, too. However, what essentially connects the two theories is their shared notion of the power of education for transformative action, for challenging the power relations in society. Hence, curriculum is a social construction which reflects—and either reinforces or challenges—the dominant divisions of power. As Raymond Williams has shown, the curriculum represents a particular set of 'selections from a culture' (1981). Therefore the point at issue here is: Whose voices are heard—and silenced—in the knowledge that museums choose to communicate? Further, pedagogy is a matter of principle and purpose

rather than mere technique. How museums educate their visitors —and learn from them— must reflect, according to Gramsci, both the reasons behind and the content of what is being communicated.

Either through ‘common-sense’ (Gramsci) or ‘the way things are’ (Bourdieu), the field forces direct the museum towards dominant trends in the cultural and education sector, such as an emphasis on learning rather than education, an output-driven marketisation and the individualisation of the museum experience. The field of culture is only partially autonomous. The degree of its autonomy or, on the other hand, its consensual integration with wider structural forces, has to be considered. Distinction in museums might be withering away, but new forms of domination —seemingly open and inclusive— move the threads of the culture game. Bourdieu supported the inter-relationship of the cultural field with other material and non-material forces. Nevertheless, it seems to me that, at present times, the notion of hegemony can assist us in exploring the unintended results of some of the new developments in the museum field.

Gramsci points out that ‘there is no human activity from which every form of intellectual participation can be excluded’ and that everyone, outside their particular professional activity, ‘carries on some form of intellectual activity..., participates in a particular conception of the world, has a conscious line of moral conduct, and therefore contributes to sustain a conception of the world or to modify it, that is, to bring into being new modes of thought’ (1971; 9). In the light of this, Habermas’s proposition for a ‘depth hermeneutics’ can assist in exploring such new thinking, which, free from the restraints of tradition, habitus or unequal distributions of capital, can educate and contribute to a critical understanding and analysis of the social world.

Gramsci argued for the potential of hegemony being turned into the fabric of a new egalitarian and democratic society. Essentially, he supported a hegemonic project to be achieved by the dominated groups through the whole social stratum identified as civil society and in particular, under the direction of the subordinate groups’ ‘organic intellectuals’. Instead of organising relations on the basis of consent —what the bourgeois project was about— the ‘organic intellectuals’ would organise knowledge from ‘below’: ‘the foundation of a new and integral conception of the world’ (Vacca, 1982). The contribution museums might make to this world view has been an important motivating factor in this study.

Chapter 4

Research design and methods

The aim of this chapter is to set out the rationale behind the design of the research. I will explain the logic of the methodological schema employed and present the thread connecting the different research phases and tools used.

The theoretical framework of the study calls for a design that explores the dialogue between the macro-structures that determine dominant educational discourses policies and practices, with the micro-level of the local museum context they are being translated into. First, it calls for an exploration of the identity and social background of the visitors in the museums under examination. Since complex theoretical concepts are not easily translated into measurable categories, broader considerations determined the methodological choices made. In other words, if testing, for example, Bourdieu's theory of cultural capital by examining visitors' educational background were too deterministic a way of translating theory into research practice, finding methods that would give answers to the research questions set was a challenging task right from the start. In particular, there was one issue persistently in sight, even from the very first stages of this research: if, rather than merely examining how adults learn in the museum, this study aims at working with research participants towards an in-depth inquiry on hegemonic narratives in the museum, what research methods would be most appropriate in achieving this?

In particular, methodological considerations related to the ways research tools could explore the gradual emergence of dominant discourses around learning in the museum into the field of museum education for adults in Dundee. Examining the role of museum educators in translating those trends into practice needed to be pursued at the very level of each organisation itself, since there were notable differences in their educational programming. A comparative examination of the four museums and galleries in the city would not have been of great value, unless one was in a position to examine the overall trends of museum participation in the city. Ultimately, which research methods could assist in breaking down museum walls and expanding the research to include the views of, rather than solely museum visitors, those that were not keen museum-goers?

Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992) have argued persuasively against the quantitative-qualitative split in social science. Indeed, Bourdieu, working either by himself (1990) or with his colleagues (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992), often suggested the fallacy of the dichotomy between structure and agency. This study, in order to combine the examination of structures and agency in the museum field, uses a mix of quantitative and qualitative tools —what has recently been called a ‘mixed-methods’ approach. The need to examine social structures, such as gender, class, education and ethnicity and how they affect participation, as well as looking at habitual beliefs and common-sensical ideas and how they determine educational experiences in the museum, led to the combination of quantitative tools with ethnographic methods, such as observations and interviews. Gramsci’s theory of hegemony had already influenced the review of the previous literature in the area; his theoretical contributions, alongside Williams’s and Habermas’s, led to the application of critical ethnography and critical discourse analysis. As I will show in this chapter, their combined use allows for an examination of how certain selective, rather than collective, traditions determine the construction of museum narratives and what one learns from them —that is, if they choose to learn from them at all. Critical ethnography and critical discourse analysis offer a more in-depth analysis and interpretation of museum education policies, as well as the views of museum educators and research participants in the field. Both methods allow for research practice that is broadly aligned with what Habermas called the ‘hermeneutics of suspicion’; indeed, as I discussed in the introduction of the study, the emphasis on education, access and increased participation in museums and galleries is not unprecedented in museum history. On the contrary, it seems that education has always been in the list of priorities of museums and galleries’ declared public mission. But who is it for and for what purposes? I would argue that a combination of research tools and a parallel investigation at multiple levels of museum work might give some answers to these questions.

In terms of the structure of this chapter, first, I focus on the reasons for and implications of the application a mixed methods research design. I then discuss critical ethnography and its particularities in relation to what is broadly called ethnographic research. I move on to examine the reasons for applying a multiple-case study approach. Finally, the specific quantitative and qualitative tools that were used are presented; namely, the questionnaire survey, direct and participant observation, interviews and critical discourse analysis.

1. Overcoming the dichotomy: the application of a mixed-methods research design

Mixed-method research designs are those which combine the use of both qualitative and quantitative research methods, either by following a pattern of applying them in sequence and thereby feeding the findings of one strand to the other, or following their synchronized combination (Brewer and Hunter, 1989; Greene and Caracelli, 1997; Morgan, 1998; Newman et al., 1998; Sandelowski, 2000; Tashakorri and Teddlie, 1998; 2002). Despite the multiple methodological traditions, epistemologies and value stances, research has shown the generative potential of the mixed methods inquiry for a more complete understanding of educational phenomena (Green and Preston, 2005). According to Green and Preston,

There is renewed spirit of dialogue and sophisticated curiosity concerning research practice boundaries, their transgression, redrawing and for some, blurring and possibly even elimination where distinguishing quantitative from qualitative methods is concerned (2005; 167).

Through a mixed-method examination of the museum field, both its particular and general attributes can be investigated; the researcher can enquire on patterned regularities that are to be found in visiting trends, but also pursue more sophisticated close-ups onto the contextual complexities of the visitors and the sites visited. Therefore, the application of such a research design can assist the examination of both the macro-structural contexts the museum sector belongs to, and at the same time, engage with the diversity and difference of more topical museum issues.

A mixed methods research design was considered appropriate in this specific study for a number of reasons. First, all four major museum and gallery sites in the city are examined, offering therefore a more holistic, macro-investigation of the contribution of the museum sector to the educational and leisurely pursuits of the inhabitants of this middle-sized Scottish city. Second, the diversity of their collections, exhibitions, educational programmes and, as will be shown later on, constituencies, requires a more in-depth examination of each particular case, in order to achieve a comparative perspective.

Nevertheless, apart from the more pragmatic reasons which relate to the specifics of this particular research, my epistemological and ontological stance calls for a research framework

which, moving away from purely academic traditions and conflicts, looks at exploring the meso-level of the convergence of the socio-historical conditions contemporary museums operate in, with the diversity of ways that they either inculcate or resist dominant representations and discourses. Therefore, despite closer affiliations with what has been broadly described as ethnographic research, quantitative data is seen as adding value to the exploration of visiting trends and their relation to adult education in the museum. Regarding the particular case of Dundee, such a framework offers an overview of the visitation patterns and the characteristics of those regular and non-regular visitors in the city's museums and galleries, under the light of which narrative accounts of personal museum experiences are analysed.

Greene et al. (1989) reviewed a large number of studies which used mixed methods research designs and concluded on the following five potential advantages: a) initiation —to discover fresh perspectives through contradictions and paradoxes; b) triangulation —to test the convergence or validity of the findings; c) complementarity —findings are more elaborate and clear; d) development —one research strand can built on the findings of the other; and e) expansion —extending the breadth and scope of the project. Plewis and Mason (2005) support Greene et al. (1989) and claim that even though the triangulation of findings often enhances the validity of the interpretations, their non-convergence might challenge them and hence new ways of thinking could be introduced.

In general, when social phenomena are examined from different vantage points, mixed methods can offer a cross-examination of the findings (Brannen, 2005). The application of qualitative tools only, even though it offers an insightful gaze to selected research sites, can also be weak in contextualisation, failing to make sense of the data in relation to structural conditions and historical time. In studies where the narrative accounts are not accompanied by contextual information, meanings are sometimes interpreted only on the basis of the actors' own interpretations (Nilsen and Brannen, 2002). In a way, such approaches are very similar to current museum education methods, which glorify visitors' interpretations and understandings without attempting to contextualise, exemplify or even challenge them under the contemporary socio-historical conditions. Hence, agency is often attributed to actors without reference and link to the resources available to them. In this way, no continuity is sustained between individual experiences and social reality. It is suggested that such a research design framework can possibly

offer museum workers a useful tool, whereby they could examine visitors' learning experiences in greater depth.

On the other hand, criticisms have also been levelled against mixed methods research. Most of these concentrate on the different epistemological assumptions held behind the quantitative and qualitative paradigms, to the extent that it can be held that their different research cultures and traditions can never work towards convergence (Brannen, 1992). According to Brewer and Hunter,

We must address an ethical problem posed by multimethod research. This problem stems from the ability of multimethod research to identify and combine a variety of discrete data points from different methods, thereby linking information about individuals and groups that could not be linked if the methods were used separately. This is a ...kind of threat to privacy (1989; 194).

This study is cognizant of this risk and has, therefore, ensured the avoidance of such breaches in the participants' anonymity and confidentiality.

To conclude, both the context of the enquiry and the specific research questions call for the application of a diversity of methods, rather than the choice of a more orthodox approach. Instead of treating them as monolithic methodological entities, this study finds in the mixing of quantitative and qualitative methods the permeable domain, where the 'messiness' of the museum encounter, its tensions, ambiguities and ambivalences are to be revealed. According to Brannen,

The aim of methodology is to help us understand, not only the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself. A multi-method strategy should be adopted to serve particular theoretical, methodological and practical purposes. Such a strategy is not a toolkit or a technical fix. Nor should it be seen as a belt and braces approach. Multi-method research is not necessarily better research. Rather it is an approach employed to address the variety of questions posed in a research investigation that, with further reading, may lead to the use of a range of methods (2005;182).

2. Critical Ethnography

The roots of ethnography in the imperialistic and colonial practices of Western powers during the nineteenth century have been discussed and criticised elsewhere (Asad, 1973; 1986; 1994; Feuchtwang, 1973; Kabbani, 1986; Said 1985; 1989; 1993). Colonialism determined an intimacy with previously unknown cultures which was one-sided and provisional, aiming at the collection of information for the subject territories; 'the cultural mapping of subject peoples for the purposes of objectifying, controlling and regulating their entry into capitalist social relations' (Jordan and Yeomans, 1995; 391). According to Said's famous work on orientalism (1985), ethnography and anthropology often served the project of the occidental hegemony over its Eastern subordinates.

Jordan and Yeomans make an interesting critique of more contemporary ethnographic practice:

The state still has a direct interest in promoting research that provides it with facts for the purposes of social regulation. That is, the connections between contemporary ethnography and its antecedents, anthropology and sociology, are enmeshed within the historical development of state forms of power, control and regulation of collective (class, gender, race) and individual identities (1995; 393).

Nonetheless, according to them, one is not to go as far as postmodern ethnographers like Clifford, for whom 'a world system now links the planet's societies in a common historical process' (1986; 22). Postmodernist ethnography has been criticised by a wide range of researchers (see Anderson, 1989), who argue that its obsession with the ethnographic text has distanced it from the actual lived realities of the field. Jordan and Yeomans argue that 'post-modern ethnography amounts to little more than a re-assertion, under late capitalism, of the politics of a nascent liberal-pluralism within anthropology. Indeed, we would go so far as to say that postmodernism is in need of political economy' (Jordan and Yeomans, 1995; 395). Equally, they argue against Sharp's (1982) orthodox Marxist ethnographic standpoint, which, even though attempting to grasp 'inner relations, causal processes and generative mechanisms' (Sharp, 1982; 48), according to them, is deterministic and limiting.

Traditionally, ethnographic tools like observations and interviews have been the most popular methods used by qualitative researchers. As opposed to quantitative approaches, spending considerable time interacting with the participants and often reflectively looking at their own

subjective assumptions, background and politics, are both important aspects of conventional ethnography. Similarly, the issue of reflection both for the researcher as well as for the participants is of central importance for critical ethnography: there is an explicit need to identify and challenge preconceptions regarding ways of thinking and acting, pre-given knowledge and 'truths' (Brookfield, 1987).

Whilst more conventional forms of ethnographic work follow the interpretivist paradigm of looking at '...cultural scenes, microcultures...' in order to '...provide the kind of account of human social activity out of which cultural patterning can be discerned...' (Wolcott, 1999: 67-8), critical ethnography adopts an ontology of political commitment, adding the 'so what?' question to the interpretation of ethnographic findings. In other words, it enriches the 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973: 7) of social sites with the dialectics of the possible, moving from 'what is' to 'what could be' (Thomas, 1993: 4). In terms of epistemology, rather than adopting a 'disinterested' approach, critical ethnography is political, acknowledging as its primary politics the need to privilege the voice of the researched (McLaren, 1992). Political commitments of this kind have received strong criticism from the academia; Hammersley, for example, criticises emancipatory models of inquiry, arguing against social change as the ultimate purpose of research and claiming that the terms emancipation and oppression 'as slogans...maybe appealing but as analytical concepts they are problematic' (2004: 482).

Critical ethnography has an interest in exploring those particular phenomena that social agents take for granted, 'observes...what is largely familiar as if it were alien' (Lüders, 2004: 224). However, it is often the case of ethnographic studies focusing exclusively on the lifeworlds of their protagonists, thus ignoring the relationship between this world and the predominant system. In the face of this, Paul Willis, together with others at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, has insisted on the need to consider the theoretical background which cannot be directly derived from the field of inquiry. Willis (1997) gave this approach the acronym TIES: Theoretically Informed Ethnographic Study. According to Willis, critical ethnography adapts ethnographic writing to take into account larger issues of political economy and larger vistas of representation. Similarly, this study, starting from a specific theoretical basis and taking into account the historically given circumstances within which the subjects are acting, is utilising critical ethnography research tools.

In particular, critical ethnography has attempted to establish an alternative, critical method, which challenges the taken-for-granted assumptions of conventional and post-modern approaches. Hence, even though it emphasises the ideological basis social science often gives to the dominant powers, it aims at reconstructing the conceptual practices which conventional ethnography usually adopts; that is, grounded theory frameworks, as well as analytical concepts like validity and generalisability (Jordan and Yeomans, 1995). Nevertheless,

While it has achieved respectability and is now part of the qualitative tradition within universities, the question remains as to whether it has had any significant impact beyond the seminar room...Our point is that academic success and respectability is one thing, changing the world is quite another (Jordan and Yeomans, 1995; 399).

Therefore, in order to pursue a critical project which starts from and works with research participants' knowledge and skills, this research design was based on Jordan and Yeomans' (1995) proposal for linking critical ethnography with the 19th century concept of 'really useful knowledge' (Johnson, 1988).

Johnson (1988) analysed the early nineteenth century radical efforts for establishing alternative, counter-hegemonic forms of education, as having four broad objectives: a) resist provided education; b) promote self-education; c) focus on 'education, politics, knowledge and power' (Johnson, 1979; 5); and d) seek knowledge for radical practicality.

Jordan and Yeomans (1995), following Gramsci's notion that social relations are always pedagogical in nature, seek to apply a 'really useful' critical ethnography, where educational research and expertise is a resource available to all, rather than few. As they support, 'at the end of the day/night shift, the ethnographer's material location is often at odds with those whom they research' (1995; 400). Similarly, Crowther and Martin (2005) stress that the purpose of critical research in the radical tradition of 'really useful knowledge', is education for social transformation; essentially, Johnson's notion of 'practical' knowledge emphasised the need of education to be integrated with the experience and interests of people in their everyday life. Therefore, in order to avoid 'data decay' and truly engage with the researched in disclosing relations of power and shaping knowledge for conscientisation (Freire, 1972), researchers must try to impart the skills of a critical questioning of the world:

Making the everyday world problematic for ourselves is not enough; making it problematic for those we leave behind in the field should be the point (Jordan and Yeomans, 1995; 401).

The application of an ethnographic framework which purely examines the 'reality' of exhibition interpretation in the micro-environment of a gallery, could easily lead to missing out the wider 'reality' which lies in structures transcending the specific interaction. Bourdieu speaks about 'strategies of condescension': to use simple language, interactive displays, and 'fun' exhibits, could sometimes consist in deriving more power and authority 'in the very act of symbolically negating that relation, namely, the hierarchy of the languages and of those who speak them' (2002: 128).

In conclusion, like any other tool, critical ethnography can present the researcher with hurdles in the field, the most profound being the claim of the ability to see things others miss. The ramifications of such a powerful knowledge claim have to be taken into account and be constantly interrogated (Springwood and King, 2001); this is what Kincheloe and McLaren mean, when they talk about the need for 'research humility' (1994; 151). Other criticisms focus around issues of 'validity'; there is scepticism about the objectivity of critical ethnographers' work. As Anderson supports,

Their agenda of social critique, their attempt to locate their respondents' meanings in larger impersonal systems of political economy, and the resulting conceptual 'front-endedness' of much of their research raises validity issues beyond those of mainstream naturalistic research (1989; 253).

Dingwall has criticised critical researchers for not allowing any space for the opposing argument: 'Are the privileged treated as having something serious to say, or simply dismissed as evil, corrupt or greedy without further inquiry?' (1992; 172) Nevertheless, instead of looking for scapegoats, it is the very spaces of human interaction, like the discursive, ideological or institutional spaces of education and culture, which are the objects of the critical gaze. Critical ethnography is not critical, purely because its very name claims to be so; its critical elements lie in looking for the alternative possibilities 'conventional' ethnography might miss.

3. Case study approach

As already discussed in the introduction, the research was conducted in an urban context, the city of Dundee. It was based on a multiple case study approach (Stake, 1994; Punch, 1999; Yin, 1994), conducting fieldwork on all the main city museum and gallery sites¹⁵. According to Yin (2003), multiple-case designs may be preferred over single-case designs, since cross-case findings offer a comparative dimension that single-case studies do not. As with other case study types, they involve the collection and synthesis of data from documents, interviews, direct observations, participant observations and physical artefacts (Yin, 1994); in the case of museums and galleries, physical artefacts are the museums and exhibitions themselves.

Four museums became the case studies under consideration, namely the McManus Galleries and Museum, the Dundee Contemporary Arts, Verdant Works and the Discovery Point Antarctic Museum (both belonging to Dundee Heritage Trust). The McManus Galleries, with rich art displays and a range of other local and natural history collections, has kept a very traditional exhibitionary approach. On the other hand, Dundee Contemporary Arts, for some known as the 'Tate Modern of the North', is a diverse contemporary art space, located in a regenerated area of the city, with great visitor numbers, progressive exhibitions, cinema, shop and restaurant. Discovery Point, which celebrates the 'RRS Discovery', presents the Scottish naval quest in the Antarctic and is under the supervision of the Dundee Heritage Trust. Finally, Verdant Works, an industrial heritage site, presents the once eminent jute industry of Dundee, contributing to local history and the industrial history of Britain. A more detailed background to each site will be given in the chapter to follow.

As with the mixed methods approach adopted, a principle of combined purpose guided the choice of the multi-case study design. The interest in these specific case studies is intrinsic, in the sense that Dundee museums are diverse in their educational offer, collections and legal status, nonetheless working complementary (or not?) in a city that has been facing the challenges of urban re-generation for the last decade. Therefore, research focused on the nature of the individual cases, their historical

¹⁵ There are five other museums in Dundee, which, having very low visitor numbers and limited collections, were deemed too small to be included in the research. These are: Frigate Unicorn, a wooden warship at the Dundee harbour; the Mills Observatory, a local authority, public observatory; and the University of Dundee Medical History Museum, the University Museum Collections and the University Zoology Museum.

background and physical setting, as well as the economic, political, legal and aesthetic context in which they operate. However, there is also instrumental interest in analysing the specific cases, for such a research design offers insight into the bigger picture of the developments around adult education in museums in the UK. In any case, a comparative dimension to the study is crucial (Ragin, 1987; Schofield, 2000), in order to uncover essential features of the separate cases, illuminate key relationships, and thus reveal the nexus of museum adult education provision in the urban context of Dundee.

4. Quantitative and Qualitative Strands: the choice of methods

a. Quantitative tools

In terms of the quantitative strand of the study, questionnaires were used in order to gather data regarding the visitors' demographics for every site. Primary data collection was conducted in the field by the author, using a structured questionnaire¹⁶ that included seven areas of investigation: frequency of visit; area of living; gender; age; occupation; education; and ethnicity. The sampling of the population was random and the questionnaire survey lasted for five months (March-July 2005). Approximately three hundred questionnaires were gathered from each organisation, with the purpose of examining the visitors' profile; the total number of 916 questionnaires has given an adequate sample on the basis of which statistically significant observations¹⁷ were made regarding the social characteristics of the visitors. The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used for the analysis of the quantitative data; in particular, descriptive statistics and crosstabulations were applied in the comparisons across the four case studies.

The quantitative findings give a clear picture of the identity of those who visit Dundee museums in their leisure time. As will be shown in the next chapter (where detailed analysis of the questionnaire instrumentation and the research findings will be given), through a comparative analysis of the findings from every site, one can clearly distinguish interesting visitation patterns for the four museums examined. As already suggested elsewhere, this has offered a concrete contextual basis on

¹⁶ See Appendix I.

¹⁷ Pearson chi-square (χ^2) testing was applied in order to test for the statistical significance of the quantitative findings. Tests of statistical significance, such as the chi-square, suggest how confidently we can generalise to a larger (unmeasured) population from a (measured) sample of that population (Chi-square tutorial, online, 2006).

which to analyse the particularities of each site and participants' narratives on the Dundee museums' educational role.

b. Qualitative tools

On the other hand, qualitative methods were chosen as the most pertinent part of the research design for this study, for their characteristics coincide to a great extent with the nature and specifics of the investigation (Flick et. al., 2004). Indeed, the 'qualitative turn' has often challenged the adequacy of quantitative tools (Jordan and Yeomans, 1995). Nevertheless, even though qualitative research has been widely accepted within the academia, cultural policy-makers, visitor-studies' funders and often museum educators themselves, have tended to adhere to more quantitative methods of evaluating educational work in the museum. This has obviously had implications on the relevant research; first, quantifiable aspects were given far more credit than others; and second, many learning experiences that could not have been articulated in numerical terms were often not reported at all. Such tendencies were discussed in my overview of previous literature, where I showed how contemporary discourses of learning in museums seem to put more weight on measurable 'indicators', rather than on ethnographic-style narrative accounts of visitors' experiences.

i. Critical ethnography in the Dundee museums

During the initial research phase of this study, the primary method used was direct or participant observation, in order to look at how visitors interact with the displays and what kind of learning occurs either in the exhibition space or in the educational programmes organised. However, the technique did not prove fruitful, since the very act of examining what was already there did not leave any scope for looking at how visitors might think of what *could* be but was not —as already discussed, this is one of the prime differences between critical and 'conventional' ethnography. Therefore, it was decided to use the 'accompanied visit' approach (Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri, 2001).

Following this method, research participants were free to make their own route in the gallery space, stop wherever they want to and comment on anything they decided. In contrast to its application in other research, what made it part of a *critical* ethnographic design is that, through discussion and questions, it was attempted to prompt the visitors in a critical questioning of the displays; after

asking a few questions about their own background, the researcher explores the exhibition narrative with the interviewees, looking at how it relates to their own worlds, what sort of meanings are communicated and how the narrative could be different. This method is using a Freireian (1972), dialogic approach; it is a 'think aloud' method, with the emphasis on critique and the exploration of alternative and dormant narratives.

Participants were encouraged to talk about pre-specified topics, using their own language and frames of reference. Therefore, accounts or versions of experiences, emotions, identities and diverse 'knowledges' were explored as they emerged from the encounter with the museum displays and the interaction/ discussion with the interviewer (Silverman, 1993; Mason, 2002). The narrative of non-neutral interviewing is dominant in contemporary methodology texts:

As we treat the other as human being, we can no longer remain objective, faceless interviewers, but become human beings and must disclose ourselves, learning about ourselves as we try to learn about the other' (Fontana and Frey, 1994; 373-374).

Criticisms against standardised interview formats focused on the latter being alienating and resulting in misleading replies. According to Cicourel, fixed choice attitudinal questions are doomed to failure because of their limited span of meaning-construction (1964). Feminist social researchers also saw structured interviewing as limited, since it is only the interviewer who has the power to define what is relevant in the interview and what not (Seale, 1998). Therefore, instead of specific questions, a 'topic pilot' became the guiding framework for the accompanied visits in Dundee.

Initiating the discussion with questions regarding their background and the displays, it was attempted to explore, together with the participants, invisible cultures and untold stories in museums. By looking at the galleries through their eyes, both the researcher and the researched collectively identified features of the exhibitions shaped by dominant ideologies and common-sense attitudes, and found ideas on how they can be subverted and new stories be told. The topics discussed related to participants' general views on museums and galleries, what they understand by education in museums and the ways they use exhibitions to learn new facts and ideas. Following the exhibition narrative, research participants would expand on the stories told by adding their own personal perspective. Prompting the interviewees into a critical questioning of the displays was not as challenging as initially it was thought it would be; most of them would readily offer their views on the educational role of the museum and the ways it could change. Of particular interest is the

language used: 'demystifying' aesthetic codes and overcoming traditional canons of appreciating art could be an invaluable finding on its own.

Groups or individuals that are not frequent in museums and galleries were asked to participate in the research. Their sampling was purposeful, so that respondents from a range of backgrounds were included. Participants were mainly members of community education groups. Interviews would often be taken with more than one interviewees, especially in the case of non-visitors. For example, South Asian women groups would only visit the museum in groups of five or more.

Finally, in-depth interviews with the museum education officers were applied to grasp the education offer for adult visitors from the museums' point of view. Interviewing seems currently to be the most widely used tool in contemporary social science (Rapley, 2004). Consequently, the literature on interview methods is very wide. Even though there are many different types of interview schedules, it was attempted to collect data in the form of a semi-structured, 'topic' discussion.

To conclude, the transcription and coding of interviews, as well as documentation data from the museums under investigation and the field diaries, offered a significant amount of data regarding the educational provision and visitors' own experiences in the museum. The analysis of this work requires the organisation of varied and complex narratives, descriptions, perceptions and perspectives. As will become apparent in the next section, critical discourse analysis was a useful fieldwork tool in the joint examination of each site's exhibition narratives together with the research participants.

ii. Critical Discourse Analysis

The theoretical origins of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) lie in Louis Althusser's theories of ideology, Mikhail Bakhtin's genre theory, and the philosophical traditions of Antonio Gramsci and the Frankfurt School (Titscher et. al., 2000). CDA is a research tool which examines the ideological use of language, by analysing texts to investigate their interpretation, reception and social effects (Wodak, 2004). It has been criticised for its open political commitment (Toolan, 2002); Henry Widdowson, for example, has strongly argued against CDA, by claiming that it constantly sits on the fence between social research and political activism, and also arguing against the term 'discourse' as being both 'vogue and vague' (1995:158).

Despite criticisms, critical discourse analysis has become an established paradigm in linguistics. Nevertheless, according to Fairclough and Wodak, it examines language in a broader way—for CDA, language is social practice:

Describing discourse as social practice implies a dialectical relationship between a particular discursive event and the situation(s), institution(s) and social structure(s), which frame it: The discursive event is shaped by them, but it also shapes them. That is, discourse is socially constitutive as well as socially conditioned- it constitutes situations, objects of knowledge, and the social identities of and relationships between people and groups of people. It is constitutive both in the sense that it helps to sustain and reproduce the status quo, and in the sense that it contributes to transforming it. Since discourse is so socially consequential, it gives rise to important issues of power (Fairclough and Wodak, 1997; 258).

This study has utilised critical discourse analysis as a methodological position which framed the ways exhibition narratives were approached and discussed in the accompanied visits with the research participants. Instead of using CDA for the textual analysis of interviews data, this study proposes CDA as a tool for the explanation of exhibition narratives; an example of such a use of CDA is given in chapter five, in the analysis of a Verdant Works video exhibit, the 'Juteopolis'. However, how can one work with an essentially discourse analysis method in the examination and explanation of museum and gallery exhibitions?

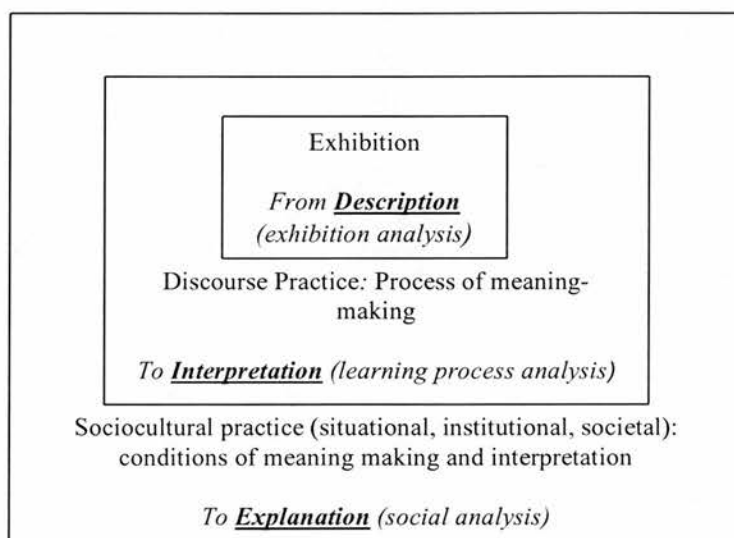
CDA studies public spaces, in order to analyse hybrid and innovative genres as well as the notions of 'time', 'identity' and 'space'. Even though it deals with language, Fairclough has emphasized the need to incorporate visual images and sound, as other semiotic 'texts' (1995); a similar synthesis of text, sound and image is applied by museums and galleries in constructing their displays. Regarding the mode of analysis used, there are three dimensions of every 'discursive event'¹⁸: the *textual level*, where content and form are analysed; the level of *discursive practice*, i.e. the socio-cognitive aspects of text production and interpretation; and finally, the level of *social practice*, related to the different level of institutional or social context. In this research, aspects of CDA are utilised in examining the

¹⁸ Meaning, 'instance of language use' (Titscher et. al., 2000: 147). Laclau has also commented: 'By 'the discursive' I understand nothing which in a narrow sense relates to texts but the ensemble of phenomena of the social production of meaning on which society as such is based. It is not a question of regarding the discursive as a plane or dimension of the social but as having the same meaning as the social as such...Subsequently, the non discursive is not opposite to the discursive is if one were dealing with two different planes because there is nothing societal that is determined outside the discursive. History and society are therefore an unfinished text' (1981).

displays of the museums researched; how narratives are built, what types of messages are put together and across through the use of text panels, video shows, as well as specific choices of artefacts and artworks.

Exhibitionary language is a unique communicating style, laden with social value and symbolic efficacy. Critical discourse analysis can unveil the hidden ‘text’ involved in ‘meaning-making’ in museums; it deconstructs the different layers of meaning by imposing a critical questioning of the visual communication. Adapting Fairclough’s model of text and discourse analysis (1992), the following schema for exhibition interpretation appears:

Table 2. CDA in the museum/ gallery (adapted from Janks, 2002).



By starting from the analysis of a specific display, the researcher can move to the interpretivist model of looking at how people actively produce meanings and make sense of them on the basis of shared ideas and pre-knowledge. Finally, the analysis widens to a macro-sociology of education and culture, by examining the socio-historical conditions that govern meaning production and learning processes in museums (Fairclough, 1992). Every phase of analysis is embedded in the previous one, emphasising their interdependence and allowing the researcher to move back and forth between the three strata of examination. According to Fairclough, there are two types of interpretation:

Interpretation-1 is an inherent part of ordinary language use: make meaning from/with spoken or written texts....Interpretation-2 is a matter of analysts seeking to show connections between both properties of texts and practices of interpretation-1 in a particular social space. Notice that interpretation-1 is part of the domain of interpretation-2; *one concern of interpretation-2 is to investigate how different practices of interpretation-1 are socially, culturally and ideologically shaped* (2002: 149, my emphasis).

This research uses critical discourse analysis in order to go beyond looking at the 'interpretive repertoires' (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999) people use during their museum encounters, to an *interpretation-2* model of analysis; a focus on the explanatory connections between museum exhibitions, education and social relations of power, and therefore on questions of ideology.

5. Research ethics considerations

Research ethics is an area of heightened interest in the literature on research methodologies (Kvale, 1996; Silverman, 1993; Bulmer, 1982; May, 1993; Reason, 1994). Questions of ethics in qualitative research are generally more radical and more difficult to solve than in quantitative work (Hopf, 2004), due to the often close interaction between the researcher and the field. The three main issues raised most often relate to consent, confidentiality and trust (Punch, 1994; Hammersley, 1998), principles that were closely taken into account.

Specifically, research subjects had to give their informed consent before participating in the research (British Sociological Association, 2002). They were therefore informed about the nature and aims of the research and could withdraw whenever they wished. Anonymity and confidentiality were kept, in order to ensure that any damage was avoided both for the participant in the research as well as the 'field' itself, in the sense that other researchers might want to investigate it in the future. In general, the researcher was not posed with any major ethical dilemmas; most of the moral issues dealt with related to the necessity to protect participants' physical and psychological health, privacy and confidentiality; all of them were attended to with care.

6. Conclusions

Research which assumes the non-ideological nature of education can have a significant ideological effect in sustaining hegemonic practices. Critical ethnography and critical discourse analysis are research methods with an overt political standpoint; the fact that other methods do not recognise or

acknowledge *their* equivalent commitments, does not in any way mean that they are more objective or that such commitments do not exist (Fairclough, 2002).

Research always entails interests, hypotheses, inclusions and exclusions —this work recognises its own, ‘partial’ perhaps, view of the world. I would suggest that a type of research that only looks at the subjective ways adults make meaning in museums, without examining the socio-historical context of this learning, is also partial.

Rooting this work in critical theoretical framework and utilising a mixed methods approach, poses design and methodological questions still to be answered. How was the research framework organised in terms of the research phases and separate tools used? The following chapter will guide the reader through the fieldwork process, the problems, surprises, experiences and findings of examining the field of museums in Dundee.

Chapter 5

Museums and galleries in Dundee: their visitor profiles and educational provision for adults

This chapter focuses on an examination of the Dundee museums and galleries' educational provision for adults, applying a case study model of inquiry (Yin, 2004). First, a brief historical background locates the four museums and galleries/ case studies more closely into their exact geographical space and historical time. The general structure of each case is built on the basis of three separate layers of examination: the field observations, the statistical data and the in-depth interviews with the education officers. With each site presenting its own particularities, this framework cannot be strictly adhered to. My attempt here is to examine the organised and less organised visitor learning experiences from the point of view of the researcher, the statistics and the museums —the chapter to follow will examine the perspectives of the people of Dundee.

A. The city of Dundee: a brief history

As already stated in the introductory chapter, Dundee was chosen as the context for this study due to the city's changing socio-economic reality; from being a predominantly industrial city, Dundee has recently embraced the calls for a post-industrial, mainly service-based local economy. In a city almost stigmatised by a negative image due to post-war unemployment, poor housing and services, population decline and erosion of the local skills base, education and culture, as I will show, have contributed significantly in creating Dundee's new socio-economic profile. This section briefly examines the history of Dundee as an important industrial and trading centre from the sixteenth to the twentieth century. However, the main focus is on contemporary Dundee's political economy, in order to establish the more recent historical context in which the museums and galleries under investigation have developed their educational work.

In contrast to the current interest in change and reform, Dundee's history has for long been one of gloom and despondency (Scott, 1999). Having been founded as a Scottish burgh as early as the thirteenth century, medieval Dundee crossed the threshold from agricultural to exchange

economy, with a particular focus on textiles, a product which would determine Dundee's history in the centuries to come. In the 1500s, when politics and religion thundered Scotland, Dundee hijacked the Reformation; episodes of iconoclastic chaos destroyed many of the town's buildings. During the seventeenth century, Dundee was attacked by both sides of the English Civil Wars. However, from the late 1700s, Dundee rose from the ashes and became a town of ambitious, enterprising merchants who launched its whaling and shipbuilding industries and switched production from cloth to linen. Even though the city's population was growing, the main roads remained narrow and poorly planned; mills erupted in the heart of the city and no planning was considered. Unlike its other Scottish counterparts, Dundee did not follow the late eighteenth-early nineteenth century trend for urban expansion via new town developments of geometric terraces and squares. In Dundee, the alterations made to the medieval street patterns were limited to few street widening schemes. Civic amenities, such as cleansing, street lighting and the supply of gas and water, were to arrive later than in other Scottish urban centres (Miskell, 2002).

Nonetheless, during the nineteenth century Dundee was a flourishing industrial city, based on specific activities including manufacturing ('jute, jam and journalism'), shipbuilding and engineering and its ancillary port services. The wealthy upper-class, famously remembered as the 'jute barons', lived in luxurious mansions in Broughty Ferry, at the outskirts of Dundee. The city had turned into a workshop, which the rich mill owners were only visiting to supervise their employees. The comfortable lives the middle classes were leading in Edinburgh, for example, were simply not the experience of the predominantly working-class Dundee; in fact, it has been argued that Dundee was 'almost wholly working class' (Rodger, 1985; 40). Mortality rates were exceptionally high: 'in 1863 it was noted that while the average lifespan of a man living in Glamis (3 miles north of Dundee) was sixty-two, the average lifespan of a man living in Dundee was only thirty-three years!' (Scott, 1999; 51). Historians have described nineteenth century Dundee as 'the closest Scottish equivalent to Charles Dickens' part-mythical Coketown' (Whatley, 1992; 12). Indeed, cheap female and child labour, along with low wages and poor housing had become the standard images of the city. Dundee was also abandoned by its middle classes, who moved away to escape from the increasingly bad social and environmental conditions that accompanied its rapid industrial expansion. According to Miskell, as a result of the disappearance of a middle-class in the city, there was 'lack of civic initiative in planning and

controlling urban growth, either in the public or the private sphere...Consequently the town was engulfed by textile manufacturing, missed out on a key phase of urban development and never recovered the lost ground' (2002; 352).

Increasing use of cheaper labour force in India led to the demise of the jute industry in Dundee at the beginning of the twentieth century. The post-war experience of a long term endemic decline in the city's traditional industrial and corporate sectors led to large-scale emigration to US and Canada. The collapse in established industrial sectors was not to be compensated for by significant inward investment or local economic diversification. Economic and corporate restructuring eroded the city's skills base, reduced income levels and undermined the provision of private services and local authority community facilities (Doherty, 1991). During the 1970s, as a result of the 'model' —mostly high-rise— housing schemes, such as Dryburgh, Menzieshill, Hawkihill and Ardler, Dundee had the highest percentage of public housing in Scotland, with 60 per cent of its population living in council estates. By the summer of 1980, fifty-five multi-storey blocks towered over the city's skyline, far from the centre and from basic amenities; what was intended as quality building developments was slowly being turned into rapidly deteriorating housing ghettos. In the meantime, at the city centre, Dundee's image had begun to change: the Tay Road Bridge opened in 1966 linking Dundee with Fife, the Olympia Leisure Centre was built in 1974, the Dundee City Council building 'Tayside House' was established (1976), as well as two brand new shopping centres —the Overgate in 1963 and the Wellgate in 1977 (Watson, 2006).

Lacking the concrete industrial base of the past, Dundee slowly experienced the post-industrial economy of developing services, such as education, health, leisure, retail and other public and private sector provision. In 1966, the Perth Road campus of St Andrews University became the University of Dundee, soon to turn into one of the largest employers in the city. The former Dundee Institute of Technology gained university status in 1994 and was established as the University of Abertay. Both institutions, together with Dundee College, have established Dundee as a city with one of the highest student populations (around 12,500 students and 3,000 staff) in Scotland.

Table 3: Largest employers in Dundee

NHS Tayside
Dundee City Council
University of Dundee
Tesco

(Source: Economic Development Dept
Company Database 2005)

The University of Dundee, in collaboration with Ninewells Hospital, gained international recognition for its medical research, specialising in the areas of biochemistry and biology. Sir Philip Cohen, a cancer research leading expert, encouraged the Wellcome Trust to fund research activity in the city. In 1994, the Trust made a donation of £10 million towards a new Medical Sciences Institute, the Wellcome Trust Biocentre, which today employs scientists from all around the world (Kerevan, 2002). The success of the Trust attracted further development in biomedical research in the area; in 2000, Cyclacel, a Dundee biotechnology spin-out company moved into its new headquarters at the Technopole business park; in 2002, the Scottish Executive announced that Dundee is to establish the new Biotechnology Intermediate Technology Institute; finally, in 2006, the £20 million Sir James Black Life Science Centre opened in Dundee, enhancing the city's reputation in biomedical research. In addition to that, digital technologies were developed by the University of Abertay; IC-Cave, the International Centre for Computer Games and Virtual Entertainment (opened in 2000) focuses at the applications of games technology and has attracted digital media experts from across the UK.

Alongside science, retail and tourism began to thrive. The city centre shopping malls were refurbished, new hotels opened and large call centres were established by Inland Revenue and British Telecom. The age of the 'personal shopper' had arrived in Dundee (Eunson and Early, 2002). The arrival of the Royal Research Ship (RRS) 'Discovery' in 1986 and the opening of the jute history museum Verdant Works boosted tourism in the city. As will be discussed later, the opening of Dundee Contemporary Arts in 1999 marked the creation of Dundee's Cultural Quarter and heralded the age of regeneration (Ogilvy, 1999). According to Watson, 'the city is also rediscovering the will to stage major events- such as the Big Weekend Radio 1 Festival...[the] Flower and Food Festival, while drawing in thousands of visitors for jazz, guitar and blues festival programmes' (2006; 210).

During the same period of the re-making of the city's image as the 'City of Discovery', Dundee's manufacturing sector experienced a fierce decline and continuous loss of a large number of jobs, jobs that had been rooted in the local skills base. The late 1970s and early 1980s saw most of the major manufacturing employers quit the city one after the other; the closure of the Timex factory in 1983 was one of the last big industries to close (Eunson and Early, 2002).

In 1996, Merrimate, the drinks company, closed down with the loss of 150 jobs. In 1997, Dundee Textiles closed and 126 jobs were lost. 2002 was an exceptionally bad year for Dundee: Levi Strauss, the jeans manufacturer, ceased production with the loss of 462 jobs; TDI batteries ceased manufacturing with the loss of 40 jobs; NCR, the ATM machine factory, cut 130 jobs and TRAK Microwave shed 46. During the same year, the charity 'Save the Children' produced a report on child poverty in Britain; Dundee's Whitfield estate appeared to have the worst record for child poverty with 96 per cent of the children in Whitfield (population 7,000) living below the poverty line (Kerevan, 2002). In 2006, Michelin, the tyre manufacturer, cut around 90 jobs, whereas NCR's redundancies of 616 people was the last major blow in

Table 4: Social grade based on occupation (Source: 2001 Census)	Dundee		Scotland
	Number	%	%
AB Higher and intermediate managerial/ administrative/ professional	17,967	15,4 %	19,0 %
C1 Supervisory, clerical, junior managerial/ administrative/ professional	29,278	25,1 %	26,6 %
C2 Skilled manual workers	13,869	11,9 %	14,6 %
D Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers	24,015	20,6 %	17,5 %
E On state benefit, unemployed, lowest grade workers	31,620	27,1 %	22,4 %
ALL PEOPLE	116,749	100%	100 %

the city's industrial belt, with discussions about the prospect of complete closure of the company and the loss of a further 750 jobs (Dundee City Council, 2007). Nevertheless, cut-throat competition, 'adaptability' in global markets and risk have hit the newly-established service sectors in the city as well; Tesco moved its distribution centre from Dundee to Livingston (432 people were employed in the Dundee depot), and two digital media companies, VIS Entertainment and Visual Sciences, had to close. Due to the increasing number of job cuts, population in Dundee (141,870, General Register Office, Scotland) has been declining steadily, with an estimation of a fall of 21 per cent by the year 2024 (projected 120,676). Further, almost half of the population belongs to social grades D and E (47.7 per cent); 30 per cent of the young people in Dundee are unemployed, and Dundee comes third —after Glasgow and Inverclyde— in the concentration of the most deprived localities in Scotland. Life expectancy is lower than the median in Scotland and the UK; the city also holds the highest teenage pregnancy rate in the country (Dundee City Council, online, 2006).

This is a tale of two cities. One is an imaginary settlement worthy of a Robert Louis Stevenson gothic horror... A lunar landscape of poverty, unsophistication and lack of modernity. The other place might as well be on another planet. This alter ego has more university students per head of population than any other European town bar Heidelberg – one in seven of the population. It boasts Britain's most internationally cited scientists. It has 10 per cent of Britain's digital entertainment industry. Both these very different cities are called Dundee (Kerevan, 2002; no page numbers).

The above could not have been a more accurate description of life in the city. Indeed, fieldwork demands required travelling back and forth from the West End's Cultural Quarter with its numerous shops, restaurants, theatres and bars to the other side of the city, the areas of Lochee, Douglas and other communities at the north of Dundee, where deprivation, lack of basic civic amenities, empty streets and boarded houses give an almost distressing feeling of isolation and decline. Although –as I showed– Dundee's political economy changed considerably over the last two decades with the emergence of a service economy and a class of professionals which was non-existent before, Dundee is still predominantly working-class. The city has benefited considerably with the influx of foreign investment and a highly-skilled workforce which is occupied in the newly biomedical, academic, cultural and media sectors (Lloyd et. al. 2006); however, this economic development was built on the foundations of initially 'top-down' Westminster regional policy frameworks and, in the post-devolution era, on the basis of public-private partnerships, community regeneration and European funding streams. Nonetheless, the chasm between the different social groups in Dundee appears to have deepened; as one of the research participants said, 'back then everybody was in the same position, everybody was poor and although you were poor there was no stigma attached. But to me, there is a stigma now and it is more noticeable now than it was long ago for some strange reason' (G, f, 69). Dundee's efforts to overthrow the old negative image of poverty and deterioration might have been relatively successful so far; the significance of an altered image however ought to be questioned in the face of the harsh realities a large part of the local communities struggle with. As I am going to discuss, it is this 'stigma' the interviewee spoke about that keeps many of the working class people away from the cultural services of their city.

To conclude, like other large UK urban centres, Dundee has gone through 'a shift away from the consumption of goods and into the consumption of services –not only personal, business, educational, and health services, but also into entertainments, spectacles, happenings, and

distractions' (Harvey, 1989; 285). The leisure-service sector and more specifically the museum and gallery sector, are a significant part of this economic trend. As will be discussed, the increasing fusion of education and marketing in the cases under investigation signals the need for an analysis that examines these developments as both cultural phenomena and as a form of economic practice. The qualitative and quantitative analysis of the four case studies under examination in the following sections cast light on the more general and specific contexts that determine the educational role of the museums and galleries in Dundee.

B. Museums and galleries in Dundee: the case studies

1. McManus Galleries and Museum



1. The Albert Institute



2. McManus Galleries and Museum

a. Short historical background

McManus Galleries and Museum was initially established as part of the Albert Institute, designed by Sir George Gilbert Scott, the leading architect of Gothic style buildings in Scotland. Indeed, even though its grandiose staircase reflects baroque influences, the building closely resembles church architecture of the late medieval period. Despite its rather eclectic mixture of architectural forms, the sheer size of the Albert Institute evokes splendour; it carries all the symbolic power of the superiority of both a secular and a religious rule.

Sir George Gilbert Scott's intention to build an imposing monument that would have everlasting impact on the local community was successful (Sidey, 1978); visitors can still feel that by entering the doors of the McManus, they become part of an elite, almost spiritual rite of passage towards a higher ground¹⁹.

The Albert Institute opened in 1867. As a typically Victorian museum, it aimed on the one hand to exhibit artefacts and artworks for the education of the local citizens. On the other hand, its displays more or less reflected the exhibitionary trends of the Victorian era for the classification and ordering of cultures and —consequently— of people themselves (Bennett, 1995). The museum's important collections, in addition to the royal connotations of its name, its location at the main city square (Albert Square) and above all, its imposing architectural structure would turn the then Albert Institute to an institution which still is the main museum and gallery in Dundee; 'the museum' as most Dundonians refer to it.

During the mid-1980s the Public Library, formerly housed at the Albert Institute, moved to new premises, allowing the museum to expand significantly²⁰. In the same period, the museum was renamed into its present name in commemoration of the Lord Provost Maurice McManus OBE²¹.

Today, McManus Galleries and Museum is a local authority facility, managed by the Leisure and Communities Department of Dundee City Council, with 31 members of staff.

b. Collections and current status

¹⁹ For an extensive discussion on museums as the sites of the sacred and the ritual, see Duncan (1995).

²⁰ During the fieldwork phase of this research, many visitors shared their memories of going to both the museum and the library as part of the same visit. Some spoke of the benefits of such a combined offer, and others even mentioned that the museum is not very popular anymore *because* of its separation from the library.

²¹ In fact, some of the interviewees questioned the more recent name given to the museum. P. commented in front of the portrait of Lord Provost McManus at the museum's reception space: 'See what I mean? From kings to lords. If you ask me, personally, I don't agree with the museum getting this name. This is all politics, nothing else'.

The McManus collections amount to about 150,000 artefacts and artworks, ranging from natural history, archaeology, community and social history, decorative arts and crafts and fine art (McManus, online, 2006). The fieldwork took place during the last months of the museum's operation, namely from January until September 2005, since the museum closed for refurbishment in October 2005, to re-open for the public in 2008. The refurbishment, 'the largest renovation project in [the museum's] 138 year history' (McManus, online, 2006), is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund (£4.9 million), Historic Scotland (£0.5 million) and private sponsorship, after the McManus Business Fundraising Appeal in November 2004²².



3. McManus Galleries

c. To enter or not to enter?

Participant observation was valuable in investigating the ways people learn in the museum. It was also helpful in refining the interview topics to be discussed with the research participants. Discussions with front of house staff were also useful, for they often shared their prolonged experiences and observations of visitors. I used observation techniques in the McManus Galleries mainly during the first months of researching the museum; extensive notes were kept

²²The event was hosted by Lorraine Kelly, a popular Dundonian morning-TV presenter; Dorothy Sandeman, Chair of DAGMA (Dundee Art Galleries and Museums Association), commented: 'A sympathetic combination of modern design allied with the splendid Gothic architectural features will transform the galleries into a functional, glamorous star attraction second to none' (McManus, online, 2006).

during the pilot phase of the study (January 2005), while observations during the rest of the fieldwork gave a better insight into specific visitor behaviours and interpretation strategies.

The first days of being onsite felt long. I found it hard to explain my research to the museum front of house staff without receiving surprised, even disapproving looks; ‘so, apart from museum education, what do you do for a living?’ The museum attendants at the McManus Galleries always seemed to occupy positions on the periphery: between here and there, the outside and the inside, ordinary, working people and museum staff at the same time. Some of them were so fascinated with their job, they would offer the study all their support; others, on the other hand, wished me a rich marriage to ‘save you from all this standing!’ (T., 22 February 2005) —everyone though, without any exception, made me feel welcome.



4. McManus Galleries and Museum staff

McManus Galleries and Museum is exactly what its name denotes: both a museum and an art gallery. The museum —prior to the current re-development— was located at the ground floor of the building, whereas the art collections were displayed on the first floor. There were three main exhibition areas at the ground floor with displays on natural history, archaeology and social history; the galleries upstairs were divided between pre-20th century and Modernist art and a separate gallery for temporary, mostly contemporary art, exhibitions.

Starting from the reception, the first impression when entering the museum was that of moving into a different time and space; the light was dim, the building quite old. In many ways, walking in the museum on a bright sunny day, from the busy central square into the serenity of this

interior, evoked a feeling similar to church-visiting. During the first days of the fieldwork, I was struck by the diverse ways that visitors walked in the museum: some seemingly decisive, not looking around, heading straight towards the café, as if of habit; others moving very slowly, almost hesitantly, having made sure that their conversations were over outside the museum. Few visitors seemed confident enough to move with no delays towards the museum galleries (even fewer people would go straight to the art gallery upstairs), while others seemed eager to spend some time looking at the museum shop, located at the reception of the museum:

13 March 2005

Couple spending a lot of time in the shop; but there are so few things to see! Are they delaying their visit to the museum or is this something they would do anyway? They seem tourists, rucksacks and all. And everything happens under the eye of the museum attendant, in silence.

The McManus museum shop was limited to the basics: a few postcards, some books, stationery and museum souvenirs. One could claim that the small size of the shop, its double role as shop/reception, and maybe its half-way location between the ‘outside’ and the ‘inside’, helped visitors gain some time, while trying to orient themselves and adjusting their vision to the relatively dark space. Entering an empty church would feel the same; in the museum, the visitor is being observed constantly by the ‘girl at the desk’.

5 February 2005

The museum is empty. D. and G. are chatting at the front desk with P. A visitor came in and they stopped talking –or they had a pause for a while. The visitor didn’t stand for long at the reception, she quickly moved through to the social history gallery.

McManus visitors often seemed to feel like intruders, but with none of the exhilaration of entering the unknown –they were being inspected closely from start:

15 March 2005

Three young boys come in the natural history gallery, they must be around 16. The mother with the pram moved to a different glass case, kind of hurried, leaving space for the boys to move. I

walk out of the gallery; D. and M. seem alarmed—they head in and contact A. to replace them at the reception.

Five minutes later, the boys are gone.

Some visitors, having passed the first test of the reception, were then left to their own devices, pace and preferences. However, some visitors were not; they were being followed along. For the three boys, coming to the museum could not have been a matter of interest in natural history; even though they seemed familiar with the space, they were not given the freedom to move. Instead, their visit ended up being more of a breach of the museum's peace and serenity, a cause for confusion, a state of emergency—their appearance²³, their age, in combination with their gender, were perceived as threatening to the displays and other visitors. In this sense, I believe that they probably enjoyed their short visit anyway. A., museum attendant, told me during the same day:

I find that mostly you get middle-aged and old aged people coming in but, yeah, you do get young people as well but I am not sure if most come to have a look or just wander round, just to kill time or something.

G., museum attendant, said at a different instance during a discussion about the museums' visitors:

6 July 2005

I would say we have two types...locals, who just want to come in, use the café, use the toilets or just youngsters who only want to come in and cause trouble.... I think there is a tendency when a group of youths comes in, you are immediately on your guard because so much trouble has been caused in the past. For instance the piece at Gallery 7 with the huge face of the father, I had children spit on that, even though there are barricades. OK, it doesn't cause damage as such but we have to wipe it off which is not very pleasant. Now with this new exhibition we have a pair of

²³ This work is being written during hostile times against what has been described by the UK government and society as the 'hooded', 'chav' culture, a new form of classism and negative stereotyping of mostly young people, associated with vandalism, thefts and harassment. Also described as 'neds', these young—mostly—boys are treated with public suspicion, police inquiries, curfews and the recently enforced ASBOs (Anti-social Behaviour Orders, issued in Scotland since 2004).

glass lungs and they are so incredibly delicate and even though the barriers are quite far away from it, I still have visions of someone breaking it.



5. Simon Reekie, Father and Son (2004)

And later on she added:

I think that young people think the museum is not relevant to them and I noticed that difference in the 'Flavour' exhibition that we had... For the Flavour exhibition they had more respect because their works were on display or their friends', their peer group... You see them, they come in with their friends and they can often be quite rude but if you can peel one off from the group and speak to them one to one at what they are looking at, you actually find that you can get the interest through that... They can be interested but they don't want to show that in front of their friends, they want to be tough and hard.



6. McManus Galleries, 'Flavour' exhibition

G., through long experience as a museum attendant, found that young people are a museum audience with their own interests and expectations. Nonetheless, McManus does not seem a very

engaging museum for young people, unless there are special events organised for them; more often than not, they are identified with 'trouble'.

On the other hand, threats to the exhibits' condition could also come from other groups. According to A., museum attendant,

I have seen it in our corporate events, when you see people leaving wine glasses on 200 year old tables, cause they are not thinking. They say oh this is good venue, I paid for it, good wine, why not get a bit drunk? And the next day when we go to the galleries we find wine glasses next to paintings, you know, things can get spilled. I don't think it is a good idea, it is more of exploitation, it is a way of thinking like, oh we can get some income here, you know...And then ordinary people pay for the up keep of this place, it is like having double standards.

Hosting corporate events is a major source of income for many museums and galleries. Nonetheless, it is mostly young people who are perceived to be the primary threat against the artworks; wining and dining, on the other hand, does not seem to be considered such a danger.

d. To read or not to read?

Having started their visit, most visitors seem to struggle with the next big dilemma: how much time should they spend in front of an artefact or a painting? How much time does an 'acceptable' visit last? How fast should they walk, how slow? How serious, how casual? Is this leisure, or it is learning? How loud should they speak to each other, or how low? Who is the ideal museum visitor?

One of the most interesting characteristics of the McManus visitors is the frequent visits of family groups. Mothers with babies, fathers and children, grandparents with their grandchildren: McManus seems to belong to the families of Dundee.

10 February 2005

'We have been coming here for ages, at least once a week. We love McManus. Both my children go to Dundee High²⁴, so we come after school. They know everything about this museum –and now I can probably say that I am getting better too'. She added that she often likes exploring the history of the city going to the library, too.

It was often very interesting to listen to the ways parents talk about the exhibitions to their children. Instead of focusing on children's learning, I centred my attention on parents themselves and looked for the ways they use the museum displays to communicate stories about their lives, their city and think about new ideas and meanings they had not considered before; some people would weave their personal experiences in the exhibition narrative, whereas others would attempt to focus more on the information they read at the text panels. A lot of them would not speak at all, asking their children to stay quiet. Some seemed quite embarrassed to speak in the presence of other people.

For example, men would most of the times spend their time in the natural history displays. Women visitors would follow other routes, most often through the social history gallery and upstairs, at the art collections. When whole families were together, it would often be both parents acting as the guides of the family around the displays; mothers would often give additional details, examples and discipline the children.

More specifically, some men seemed to like sharing factual data based on their school and personal readings. Women, on the other hand, would often connect the displays with stories from the extended family life or their own childhood. I was intrigued by a mother who skilfully turned the display of the old school class into a small fairytale for her son. Other women openly expressed their dislike for a plethora of paintings that they were finding 'scary' and would 'not want them in [their] living room', as many of them said.

Examining the two different approaches of learning in the museum was of great interest: most men would use rationality, ordering layers of thought and what they saw as respectable knowledge from the 'outside' world for the benefit of educating their families. On the contrary, some of the women would be constructing their understandings 'inside-out': personal and social

²⁴ Private high school in Dundee, located opposite McManus, in Albert Square.

experiences were the focus of the story-building, with more ‘formal’ knowledge being confirmed or questioned on the basis of the comparison. Mothers, especially when on their own, would seem freer to explain the museum displays in more personal ways, bringing examples or family stories, using games and jokes to entertain and often admitting to not always having an answer:

26 January 2005

Mother with daughter, she looks excited; she has found a merry-go-round horse²⁵ she used to play with when she was a child; shows it to her daughter and tells her how her mother has actually been on this horse. ‘It is such a pity we can’t ride it anymore. But we can’t, no, no we can’t, this is historical now, it belongs to the museum. My Goodness, I am historical’, she turns to me and starts laughing loudly. ‘Do you come here often?’ I ask. ‘No, not often, first time actually. Have just gone back to studies again, so I have more time in my hands. Never really thought that this museum could remind me so much about growing up here’.



7. McManus Galleries, Social and Community History displays

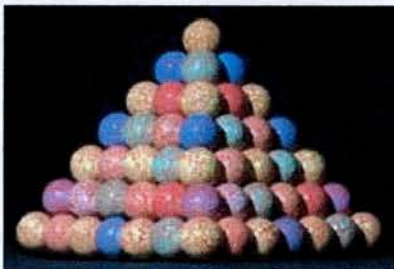
Apart from the rich in insights family scenes in the McManus, most of the other visitors' thoughts were covered under the mystery of silence. I was often startled with the lengthy silences amongst staff and visitors —just a nod of acknowledgement, when entering the

²⁵ 'Champion the Wonderhorse' was a star attraction at the City Arcade in Dundee for generations of children from the 1950s onwards.

building; that would do. The rest of the visit often appeared to the observant eye like an exercise in meditation: spending a long time in front of some displays; skim-reading, sometimes re-reading to understand; finding and following routes avoiding getting in the way of other visitors; few fulfilling moments, many puzzling gazes. The lack of a sitting area in most of the galleries would mean that visitors would have to be constantly standing; apparently, physical tiredness has to complete the set of trials in the museum.

On the other hand, visitors who came in groups of two or more, seemed to be enjoying discussions about the displays. Talking to one another, making comments about the exhibits, adding their own view to what was already there or learning new facts about the city and its history, often seemed to keep the interest going; still, though, discussions were kept relatively quiet, laughs were subtle and interaction restrained.

In fact, few visitors would attempt to see the whole museum. Most of them would either stay on the ground floor, going through the early, natural and social history collections while others seemed to prefer the art collections on the first floor. The most popular gallery of the permanent collections of the museum was arguably the social history one; the temporary exhibitions were either very popular, especially with older Dundonians, like Joseph McKenzie's photographic exhibition of 'Hawkhill: Death of a Living Community' (2/4-12/6/05), or not really popular, like the exhibition 'Reflections: New Works for the City Collection' (25/6-28/8/05) presenting mostly abstract paintings, sculpture, glass, pottery and installations.



8. 'Reflections': K. Malone, A Tutti Frutti Bubble Pyramid (2004) 9. 'Reflections': R. Woodman, Chosen I (2004)



10. McManus Galleries, Victorian and contemporary art displays

e. The educational provision of the McManus Galleries for adults.

This section focuses on the in-depth semi-structured interview with the McManus Galleries education officer. A more structured approach needed to be followed in this case; the intention was not only to acquire information, but also achieve a first ‘feel’ for the ‘game’, as Bourdieu suggests.

The McManus Galleries education officer had been working for the museum from a variety of posts before becoming full-time, a position she has had for the last two years. Her post is with the Leisure and Arts Department of the Dundee City Council, rather than fully placed within McManus Galleries. This recent establishment of a permanent education officer position — whose remit involves working on temporary exhibitions in the McManus Galleries and not on the permanent collections— reflects the relatively lesser importance that the educational aspect of the museum used to have in comparison with curatorial scholarship and conservation. The previous lack of dedicated educational staff, in combination with the absence of any long-term planning regarding education, were reflected in the one-off educational sessions McManus offered to its local constituencies, as this was communicated during the course of this interview.

What I've done is limited here, because I don't work here in every exhibition and I don't have a remit to work with the collection. We set up a team of artists when I came to post two years ago, we knew that we would need a range of artists and facilitators to deliver all these programmes that we were going to devise... The education programme for the time being is in two parts: what I would consider outreach and a public programme with workshops and talks and events, open to everybody and advertised as such. The outreach programme is with targeted groups, identified by ourselves and the partnerships we have developed over the last two years.

Indeed, during the fieldwork and for the needs of the *Flavour* exhibition (12/2-20/3/2005), a series of workshops were delivered with many young people getting involved: an opening event with live performances, street dancing and DJs, a 'visuals' (VJ-ing) workshop, a dance taster, poetry and drama workshops.

In relation to the sources of funding for the educational offer in the museum, the interviewee said:

My post is funded by the council and I am also given a core budget every year. What I tend to do is to look for external funding, develop partnerships with other organisations like the communities development section that look at children, families, community centres and tell them we have so much money, do you want to add on that and then we can do so much more... Each exhibition will have a budget and a small amount for education. In the past we would make an external application to the Scottish Arts Council for an educational programme. The huge success in the past were 'Coming to our senses' and the hats and gloves exhibition; they were both funded by the Scottish Arts Council.

Further, regarding the policies and strategies that have affected the education provision of the museum, as well as if there is a specific educational policy, she commented:

Education in the McManus is quite a complex matter. It is hugely disjointed, which has been the downside for some years now. The McManus originally had an education policy geared for formal educational activities with schools. If they brought an exhibition they would build an educational programme around the exhibition on a temporary basis, so that the programme would be built around that exhibition. This tended to be a broader learning experience, rather than a structured formal learning school pack. It aimed for informal learning and lifelong learning and involved more community groups rather than school groups. That was the time when I was working freelance for them. That was my first job. One of the educational projects I did then was for the exhibition 'Coming to our senses'; it was a sensory exhibition...so interesting to see how people access art if they have a disability, a visual impairment...I had to *introduce* the exhibition to communities before it started and then *deliver* a programme of activities and workshops and then *report* and *evaluate* that experience.

A clear distinction is made here between educational programmes geared for compulsory education from those designed for the communities for 'informal' or 'lifelong learning' purposes. Whereas schools would visit and participate in programmes which mainly focus on the permanent collection, community groups were introduced to the temporary exhibitions. The exhibition *Coming to Our Senses* (2002) marks a turning point for the McManus. Indeed, according to the education officer, it was revelatory, for both visitors and museum staff had a first hand experience of the different ways people with disabilities can enjoy and interpret museum displays. The success of the exhibition and the educational programmes built around it, had immense impact, in the sense that many traditionally non-visitors discovered the educational role of the museum for the first time. On the other hand, maybe even most importantly, museum curators saw a popularity they had never expected before. *Coming to our senses* was not just another exhibition in the museum's programming:

- it was hands-on, a *sensory* exhibition, that, on the one hand, challenged the traditional curatorial status-quo of the uniqueness of the exhibits, and on the other, linked McManus for the first time with new museum education developments that stressed the need for experiential learning in the museum;
- it offered 'informal', 'lifelong learning', a 'broader learning experience';
- it offered disabled people the unique experience of visiting the museum in a meaningful way;
- it challenged traditional views and even hierarchies of museum staff, by placing education for the first time as one of the core museum functions;
- it was successful, in the sense of attracting large numbers of visitors;
- it was partially funded by the Scottish Arts Council, as part of the museum's external funding application scheme for its temporary exhibition educational programming;
- and, last but not least, it was one of the first exhibitions which established the usual process of educational work as one that needs to be 'introduced...delivered...reported...evaluated' (see quotation above).

I think that now there is a shift towards moving education policy and educational programmes towards lifelong learning. This has reformed the role of my post for the redevelopment. So I think it's been quite a long journey over the last four years, from just school visits to a more inclusive service. Now we work with a broader range of participants.

The next issue raised was related to the ways 'lifelong learning' has affected perceptions and the actual delivery over the two years she has been in post. The education officer spoke about key national developments regarding the broadening of the educational role of museums and galleries during the last decade, but also focused on the difficulties of being dependent on a slow-moving, constantly re-structured arts local authority department:

Perhaps some years ago education wasn't really seen as lifelong learning, it was seen as a more structured, formal experience... People are aware of the changes that happen nationally. There are key national and political changes within galleries and museums and I guess this is the driving force behind the changes in the McManus.

...

However, the department of Leisure and Arts has had a lot of restructuring over the last two years. In the department I was working for, the arts development and the heritage sections were both together and the department was actually called Arts and Heritage. Then there was a big restructuring because we were amalgamated with the Leisure and Parks. Then it became Leisure and Arts, so Heritage was separate and on it goes...

The changed perceptions and culture amongst the museum staff after the *Coming to Our Senses* was evident:

There was not really any resistance when I came here, more lack of information and experience. Heritage officers worked in an isolated environment. They didn't have the skills to implement education. It was a challenging journey for them because they were very museum focused. Collections were not accessible at all. Having a lively, noisy, interactive exhibition space is not necessarily an easy thing to take on board. They used to be quite contained and consider displays as 'precious'. They were also very structured about what people were allowed to access. However, through trust building and by having a really good quality programme, staff developed their experiences of learning and access so that they have become more comfortable with letting people in. I think generally museums have not been easy places to even go into, so museum staff are not used to a lot of people demanding to have access. However, it is quite important to have sustainability in this development with participants as well as with the people that work here.

The education officer also spoke about the need for reflexivity and the professional risks of trying out new and radical ideas for community learning in the museum; for her, the efforts to challenge the museum's previous limited educational practices into a new, more participatory programme, were greatly assisted by the more widespread changes in UK museums and galleries towards embracing wider and disadvantaged groups.

To summarise, a combination of factors, like a more general political and social trend towards lifelong learning, the efforts and aspirations of a visionary individual and a successful, purely

'hands-on' exhibition (*Coming to our senses*), were the culmination of long-term efforts to establish McManus as a changed museum. To an extent, the present re-development is the continuation of these efforts to present McManus Galleries as a more inclusive institution, having adapted to the calls of the times for more popular and experiential learning through and with the collections.

On the profile of the constituencies which have been visiting the McManus so far, or those constituencies that the museum aims to attract, the education officer admitted a lack of any systematic research regarding visiting patterns in the museum. She also gave a quite lengthy overview of the ways she is working with non-visitor groups:

We need to have a coherent audience development plan before we really target priority groups and before we can develop a facility here. We have to really know who our audiences are. There has been an audience development plan developed now that will take this into consideration... Now it will become an intrinsic aspect of our work.

...

We are actively trying to attract non-visitors through the outreach programme. Prior to any exhibition I always deliver a pre-exhibition programme: the artists' team and myself are targeting groups that would not visit out of their own accord. We introduce them to the exhibition so that we can make connections with the work they did before the exhibitions. It works, people do make that connection; you introduce the works at an early stage in a comfortable and relaxing way. You can actually see them feeling more relaxed to visit because they had a first grounding. A lot depends only on their confidence to come into the building. Otherwise they think that exhibitions are not for me, I am not clever enough to understand this, so I'll be punished if I come in. If you can discuss these fears they have with them, you might give them some answers... They do not know how to react when they come in the building: Will people look at them? Will they ask questions? Can you make a noise? Can you talk to each other? They have many wrong perceptions, so it is really important for us to go out and dispel all these fears, give them an idea of what they can do, how to behave, how to react to things and also information about the actual pieces of work....Through education we want to give them a perception of ownership, ownership of the building and an understanding that other people have ownership too. It is a matter of respecting diversity, understanding the other communities, cultures and other people's heritage.

The McManus education officer, working with a team of artists, visits community groups and works with them on themes and ideas around forth-coming exhibitions; this way, groups feel more comfortable with visiting the museum, since they have had an introduction to the exhibition theme. The method is valuable; community groups can thus decide to visit or not, depending on their interests. In addition, by working towards the museum project, groups can develop enthusiasm and curiosity to visit, that they would not have had without such support; the

participation of the *Flavour* educational programmes is proof of the value of this model. Any possible disadvantages they might face, due to lack of background knowledge or familiarity with the museum space, are dispersed and community groups develop a sense of ownership of the exhibition, since they are involved in the preparations towards it.

This educational approach, unconventional in terms of most educational work in museums, gives the opportunity to think and learn about new ideas prior to the visit and enhances the possibilities to connect personal experiences with the museum displays, question them and even propose alternative readings. Finally, it introduces groups to different perspectives and develops an atmosphere of dialogue and democratic deliberation through the sharing of the exhibition space, objects, workshops and hence ideas.

However, this work can only be limited; most of this outreach work is delivered with groups of young people in relation to contemporary art exhibitions that they usually find hard to grasp and engage with:

My target groups over the last two years were younger people particularly, because I felt that there is little access for young people...However, it depends on time and resources - unfortunately we can't work with everybody and what I tend to do is also have groups that we will be working with over a prolonged period of time... I don't like to just parachute in and then go and work with somebody else. As humanly possible we try to take the group in a longer process... The aim is for them to get self-directed access rather than facilitated access, and this is what we would see as a successful development with the group.

After the redevelopment, apart from the large lifelong learning suite²⁶, it seems that the provision will be similar to the one the museum is offering at the moment, apart from the role of the front of house staff: they will become 'learning assistants'.

When the redevelopment process is over the front of house staff will be given a new job description and they will be actually called learning assistants. Their role will be far more interactive in the galleries; they will be facilitating a lot more, information and support...this has been part of the planning after the redevelopment of the building and it is within the lifelong learning remit.... There are front of house staff here who have a huge experience and knowledge of the collections and take pride in what we have in the building. If they are asked they can answer with great knowledge and passion but this has not yet been utilised.

²⁶ A detailed account of the redevelopment plans will be given after the end of this section.

Finally, the discussion expanded on more general views on museums and education; the differences and similarities between education and learning; the 'sustainability of the offer':

We want to work with the people so that they understand that this thing called heritage is not something that belongs to others; they are such a vital part of that....it is important that when this building opens again, that people come here and work with us and feel that it belongs to them and that they have the right, a very basic right to access the building: I want to hear things like 'We have been hearing about this for two years and now that we are here we want to play our part in it!'.
...

Education is a tailored provision; people decide how much they want to do themselves. If they come and make a choice and never visit again, that's fine...You might have young people who after having been here they might consider doing a formal training on something. There might be participants who are interested in becoming more confident in just coming here...Education has been perceived before like a checklist; if you checked these boxes then you have learnt something. But there's a lot more of a social aspect to it, a feeling of self-worth. Learning can be challenging; it can take people out from their comfort zone...I think we have a responsibility, which is not always a fun thing, that we offer them a support network, and a kind of network that supports even the negative experiences they have... It is about finding your own place in that learning experience and actually say I don't like this, I haven't enjoyed that, I'd like to do something else. It is important to be confident enough to participate in the first place...

Finally:

I feel a huge excitement that lifelong learning is recognised as so important, that it is not looked as an add-on to what was happening here, now it is core. Now we do not have one or the other, we have both of them together working in tandem. On the other hand, it's fine to say that we are going to accept it and support it but without really saying how they are going to sustain it financially.

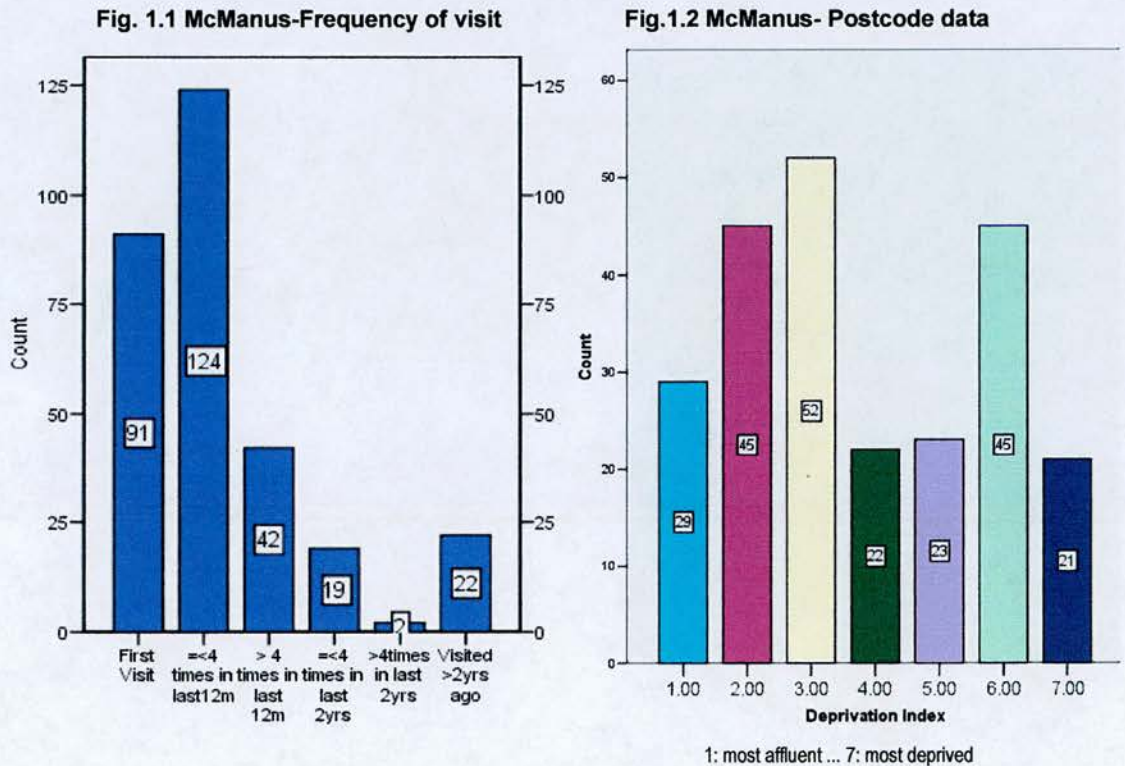
After having familiarised the reader with the museum and its educational offer, it would be useful to examine how and if this has influenced attendance at the museum. Therefore, findings of the quantitative strand of the research follow, in order to give a more holistic picture of the identity of the museum's constituencies.

f. Quantitative analysis, or McManus in numbers

This section will explore McManus Galleries' visitors demographics, through graphic representations of the findings of the questionnaire survey conducted in the museum from March to July 2005. It is an attempt to map the data, therefore largely descriptive.

The section offers a broad overview of the financial and educational levels of the McManus visitors, their age and ethnicity and their frequency of visit to the museum. In other words, who were the people I was observing for nine months? Are they locals or tourists? Young or old? Where do they live and what is their educational background? Where do they work? What will hopefully emerge as the thick description of statistical data, will at a later stage be elaborated and explored through the qualitative strand of the research.

My intention here is to look specifically at McManus; comparisons across sites and an overview of the population of museums in Dundee will follow at the end of this chapter.



As shown above (Fig. 1.1), there is a multiplicity of visiting habits at the McManus: out of the 300 visitors questioned, many of them (91) had visited for the first time. However, the numbers of those that had been in the museum before were higher: 166 people said that they had visited within the last 12 months, whereas 43 of them had visited within the last 2 years. McManus

Galleries visitors tend to visit the museum frequently, despite the fact that the displays were often characterised as dated by both visitors and staff.

In order to examine postcode data, Carstairs scores for Scottish postcode sectors (2001 Census) were utilised as a tool for defining the relative deprivation or affluence of the areas visitors from all four sites live. Carstairs scores are derived by combining selected variables derived from small area Census data. The scores measure access to material resources which provide ‘those goods and services, resources and amenities and physical environment which are customary in society’ (Carstairs and Morris, 1991). They are not a measure of individual material well-being or disadvantage, but instead represent a summary measure applied to populations contained within limited geographic localities. Postcode sectors are defined as sets of unit postcodes that are the same, apart from the last two characters. The variables on the basis of which Carstairs and Morris (1991) did their first measurements with data from the 1981 Census were: overcrowding; male unemployment; low social class; and no car. In 1991 and 2001 the variables were the same, apart from the method with which social classes were defined; the Registrar General’s Social Classes ceased to be reported and was replaced by the National Statistics Socio-Economic Classification. Carstairs scores are measured through DEPCATs (short for DEPrivation CATegories), which range from DEPCAT 1 (the most affluent postcode sectors) to 7 (the most deprived) (McLoone, 2004).

The distribution of the affluent or less affluent areas McManus visitors live in, is relatively even (Fig. 1.2), although visitors who live in more affluent areas are the majority (148 versus 89). McManus Galleries, despite the lack of an organised educational programme of activities for the permanent collections, the dated display techniques, the traditional disciplinary classifications (archaeology, natural history, social history etc) and the lack of IT tools and interactive displays, did manage to attract a wide range of people, mostly from the city of Dundee. McManus

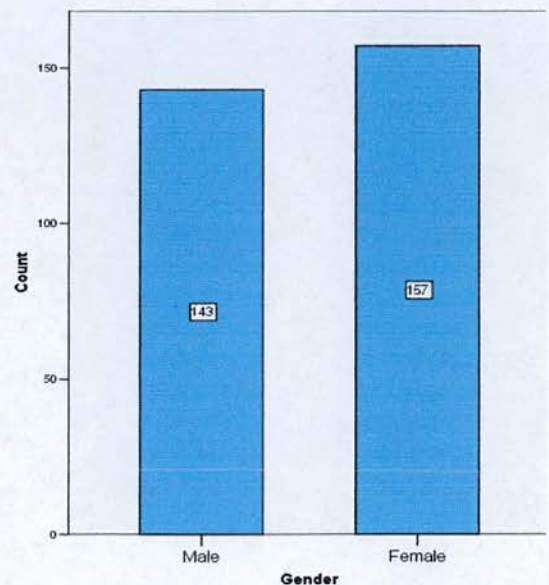
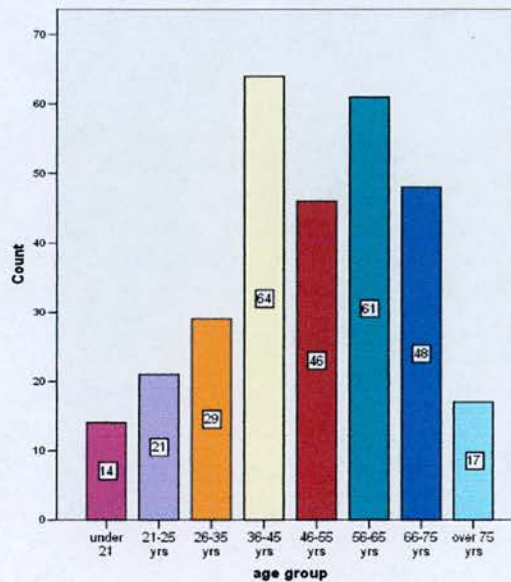


Fig. 1.3 McManus- Gender

was not a high-tech museum of the 21st century; it was an old museum which reacted to change slowly and offered few surprises. However, it did attract people from all walks of life. It will be of great interest to examine if and how the redeveloped McManus will continue to have such a broad representation of the local population.

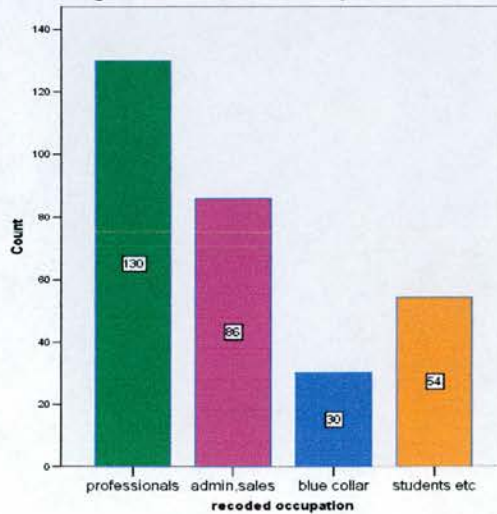
Regarding the gender (Fig. 1.3) and age (Fig. 1.4, see next page) of the McManus visitors, the distribution is balanced as well. There is only a slightly higher number of women over men visitors, whereas in terms of age, 64 people were up to 35 years old and only 17 over 75: 219 of the visitors asked were between 36 and 65 years old.

Fig 1.4 McManus- Age groups



In terms of the occupation of the McManus visitors (Fig. 1.5), professionals, managers and senior officials (130 people) outnumber the rest of the professions. The same occupational groupings are followed for every museum under study; they are in accordance with the Standard Occupational Classification 2000 (SOC 2000, online, 2005). However, the number of people

Fig. 1.5 McManus- Occupation



(86) who work in administration and sales was substantial, too. McManus fails to attract large numbers of blue collar workers (30 people, 10% of the visitor population), but in comparison with the other sites, their representation is fairly higher. Finally, out of a total of 300 visitors, 54 of them were students; again, taking the fairly traditional exhibitionary style into account, this number could be seen as considerable. Therefore, the museum attracted a diversity of the working and student population of Dundee; this is the most balanced distribution of visitors' occupational status in the museums under investigation.

Fig. 1.6 Age of leaving education: age groups

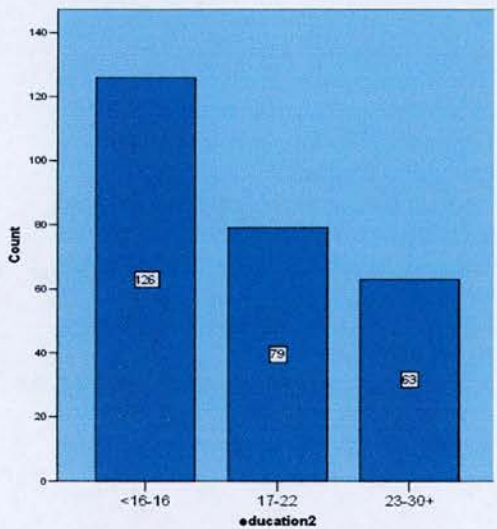
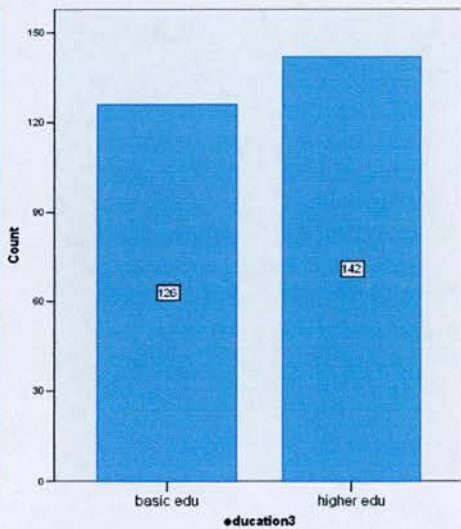


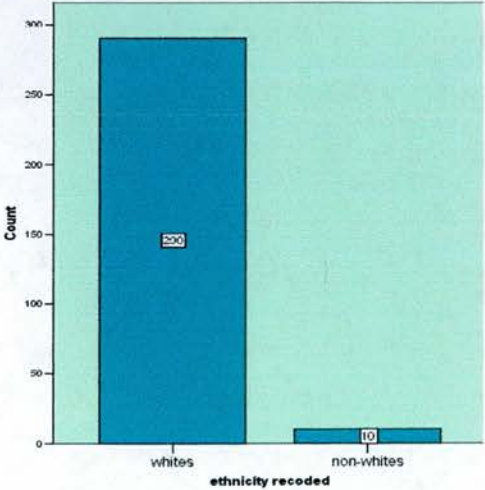
Fig. 1.7 Age of leaving education: education levels



The distribution of educational levels (Fig. 1.6, Fig 1.7) was surprisingly even as well; there is balance between those who left education after compulsory schooling with those that moved on to higher degrees or returned to education later in their lives. Nevertheless, the sum total of the people who moved on to a higher or further education degree is still higher (142) than those having only attended compulsory education.

Finally, regarding ethnicity (Fig. 1.8), the vast majority of the visitors were British (275); small numbers of Irish and other white visitors visit the museum, too. The

Fig. 1.8 McManus- Ethnicity



ethnic minorities of Dundee are in total absence; according to G., museum attendant:

Although before I started here was an exhibition on Indian embroidery which I think probably pulled in more people, in the last few years I would say no, in fact the most I have seen are the ones you are bringing in, which is a shame.

g. McManus Galleries and the refurbishment plans. Concluding remarks

McManus Galleries' Redevelopment Plan, 'Who We Are', aims 'to create a cultural facility equipped for the 21st century at the same time as conserving and restoring one of Dundee's most historic buildings' (McManus, online, 2006). The refurbishment of the Galleries is part of a greater regeneration plan in Albert Square (the main city square), which will undergo changes, too: 'this will reduce the traffic flow in Albert Square and create a wonderful new civic space for residents and visitors to the city to enjoy' (McManus, online, 2006). According to the new plans, the new museum will be transformed into a totally new space, which will be an 'open, welcoming, light and easily accessible visitor attraction' (McManus, online, 2006). Again, according to the museum's website:

We will be bringing the Museum into the café area too with discreet cases for objects as part of the décor and items for sale reflecting the subjects covered in the displays...We will be bringing together the latest information technology with the items on display to make it easy to find out more about our collection; forthcoming exhibitions, links to other museums, websites and reading lists and to ask questions about the service....Visitor facilities will be much improved with a stylish new cafe, retail area, toilets including both child and adult changing facilities, lockers, improved signage and colour coded orientation, learning assistants to help with enquiries, information or directions, hands-on interactive features, access to IT information points and palm top/hand held computers (McManus, online, 2006; my emphasis).

After the redevelopment, McManus Galleries will also have a large Lifelong Learning facility, with 'a lively programme of activities for schools and communities' (McManus, online, 2006) on the first floor. The museum will sustain its current separation of the museum collections from the art displays upstairs. The displays will construct two storylines on the ground floor, the 'Landscapes and Lives, the creation of Dundee' and the 'Making of Modern Dundee', which will feature a separate display of the living memories of ordinary Dundonians: this last part of the exhibition will be the product of an oral history project with locals sharing their memories of

the city from the mid-20th century onwards. The exhibition will continue upstairs with the Victoria Gallery, presenting Scottish Art from 1750 to 1914, the contemporary art galleries and finally the Albert Hall, presenting 'Dundee in the World': 'Dundonians who travelled and made their mark in the world' (McManus, online, 2006).

This section attempted to present the educational role of the McManus Galleries, as this was examined during the nine-month fieldwork research. Even though this offer has taken different forms, since the first hands-on, interactive exhibition at the museum in 2002 ('Coming to our senses') a wave of changes started in McManus and, to an extent, influenced many of the plans for the current re-development. A series of issues emerged from the examination of McManus Galleries and Museum as a case study:

- **Its local authority nature:** Despite being bureaucratic and inflexible at times, the local authority base presented both advantages and disadvantages for the educational provision of the museum. First, its public nature secured free admission for all its exhibitions (even the temporary ones, a rare phenomenon in large urban museums). Second, education was at the core of the museum's public mission; despite resistance from the more traditional, curatorial staff, national trends in museums and galleries and the local demand meant that this remit could never have been negotiated. On the other hand, McManus Galleries seemed as lacking a permanent education team working on *all* aspects of the collections. In any case, it would be interesting to examine the ways that the museum's local authority affiliation and structures will be modernised to keep pace with the changes in the new McManus.
- **The traditional nature of the McManus:** Despite some glass cases being arguably as old as the collections, McManus was visited by people from all social strata. Even though visitor numbers were indeed far poorer than the DCA²⁷, people from lower educational and occupational groups seemed to feel more comfortable with visiting this, rather than the rest of the museums in the city. Hence, it would be interesting to examine staff's and public's

²⁷ In 2002, according to the National Audit, McManus Galleries were visited by 81,000 people (Scottish Museums Council, 2002), whereas 'ranked in the top 10 visitor attractions in Scotland by VisitScotland, DCA visitor numbers exceed over 300,000 a year. In economic terms, the venue's payroll of approximately £560,000 has generated a net impact of an additional £3.6 million in the Tayside economy' (Scottish Executive, online, 2006).

perceptions for those aspects of the character of the old museum that will be lost. Was the lack of IT, of 'stylish' retail areas, cafes and orientation towers a deterrent to visiting for certain segments of the public? Could the fully equipped, modern McManus have similar effects to other social groups?

- The **arts and crafts based** educational provision: All educational sessions organised for the 'outreach' programme were art-based workshops. Given the hands-on, experiential nature of this kind of educational work, will these sessions continue to be at the focus of the museum offer? What is the role of arts and crafts in being fit for 'purpose', since first, they are seen as therapeutic for pathologised social groups, and second, they are delivered in a structured manner, smoothly serving the requirements for evaluation? Consequently, is the educational value of other aspects of the museum experience, like the social and community history collections, being undervalued, since they might not easily fit into the programming requirements for an hour's session in the activity room?
- The **absence of a marketing department**. Even though the current talk at the museum regarding its re-opening centres around new visitor facilities, retail services and audience development plans —easily to be identified with much of the marketing discourse prevailing museum policies and practice, McManus Galleries did not have a marketing department.
- The **limited educational offer** and **absence of an education policy**. The fieldwork revealed a tendency towards museum education at the McManus to be seen as giving 'support' to pathologised groups, like the young unemployed or people with disabilities. Due to the informal and 'soft' nature of this work, and its stark contrast to the formal, 'hard' education of qualifications and training, offering arts and crafts sessions was seen as a way to approach people who have been distant from museums and galleries. Despite the absence of a specific policy, McManus Galleries have responded positively to the governmental social policy agenda: they systematically attempt to increase 'confidence levels' towards a more self-assisted participation and social inclusion. New ways of approaching disadvantaged groups have been put in place; hence, albeit in rare circumstances, the museum did attempt to reach out to groups that would not visit the museum, offer them opportunities to engage with the exhibitions from a very early stage and therefore participate in the preparations towards their

mounting. The McManus Galleries is a good example of a museum which has conformed with the new requirements placed on museums, nonetheless attempting, whenever possible, to subvert and use them in more innovative ways.

- The use of **terminology**. The redeveloped McManus endorses education as core function, using however the terms ‘lifelong learning’ or ‘informal learning’; a ‘lifelong learning suite’ will be occupying one third of the space on the first floor of the refurbished museum. In addition, front of house staff will be re-named to ‘learning assistants’. As with most current museum learning theories, the term ‘education’ has been eclipsed from the plans of the new museum. What might this mean for educational policy and planning? What are the differences between the ‘informal educator’ of the adult education tradition from the ‘learning assistant’ of the new, lifelong learning era in the museum? What could this term imply for the nature of learning that will be on offer? What kind of trend does the *absence* of education from museum provision signify?

McManus Galleries and Museum, when it re-opens in 2008, will be a different museum for the people of Dundee. In general, examining it as a case study in comparison with the other two sites in the city is of particular interest; when the museum closed in October 2005, it did belong to the old museum tradition of the Victorian rational recreation movement, the drive for social amelioration or ‘improvement’ through popular education (Bailey, 1987). At its re-opening in 2008, McManus Galleries will become the cultural centre of the new, regenerated Dundee, in which, as is discussed in the next case study, leisure and culture are again playing a primary role, this time in the promotion of the city as a tourist, commercial and entrepreneurial centre. McManus Galleries is becoming an essential part of these developments, as the city’s main museum, linking the history of Dundee with its present profile.



11. Reception space (redevelopment plans)



12. McManus exterior

2. Dundee Contemporary Arts



13. DCA

a. Short historical background

Dundee Contemporary Arts is more than what its name implies —a contemporary arts centre presenting not only cutting edge art, but also a cinema, a café/ restaurant, a Print Studio and a Visual Research Centre. It organises periodical, temporary exhibitions of contemporary art from Scotland and abroad, while offering to the local population and tourists a plethora of other activities to engage with. According to its website:

DCA is an internationally renowned centre for contemporary arts, an award winning leader in the field of education, and a vibrant and hugely popular social and cultural meeting place (DCA, online, 2006).

DCA was brought into being by collaboration between three main bodies and a number of other individuals and organisations. Dundee City Council, the University of Dundee and Dundee Contemporary Arts Ltd have been working closely together, since the mid-1980s, when the idea for the creation of a contemporary arts cultural centre was first conceived. Before DCA opened

its doors to the public, contemporary art was presented either in the McManus Galleries or in an old warehouse in Seagate, south of the city.

A particular debt of gratitude is owed to the artists, staff and board members of the Seagate Gallery and Dundee Printmakers Workshop who kept the idea of an arts centre alive over the years and argued persuasively and with passion during the meetings, through which an Arts Strategy was formulated. The Strategy was published in 1994 by Dundee District Council, the result of public consultation and seeking the views of over 150 local and national arts organisations. It proposed the creation of a new centre for the contemporary visual arts (DCA, online, 2006).

During the same period, the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art of the University of Dundee was establishing itself as one of the top art colleges in the UK, with a variety of collaborations with artists and galleries abroad. Hence, the argument for a new art space that would have the facilities to match international gallery standards was enhanced, in order for graduates to possibly stay and contribute to the cultural life of Dundee rather than leave for the bigger UK urban centres. As a result of systematic pressure for Dundee to have a quality space for contemporary art, the City Council developed a partnership with the University and the newly founded company DCA Ltd to create such a centre that would feature open space galleries, cinemas and extensive production facilities for artists, including a print studio and a research centre for the Duncan and Jordanstone students.

The site chosen for the DCA building was a semi-derelict brick warehouse, in close proximity with the College and the Dundee Rep Theatre, forming what has been called 'the cultural quarter'. The Scottish Arts Council, together with the City Council and the University provided the capital funding. Work on site started in March 1997 and DCA mounted its first exhibition in 1999; since then, it has been attracting more than 300,000 visitors per year (Scottish Executive, online, 2006), establishing its name as the 'Tate of the North'. Indeed, its diverse artistic offer, from progressive art to film and print-making, in combination with one of the most 'chic' bars and restaurants in town, have turned DCA into one of the most popular cultural hubs in Scotland.

b. The case for regeneration

In order to place DCA into the context that created it, it is useful to briefly discuss the issue of regeneration of urban centres in the UK and abroad; as a regenerated former warehouse, DCA

bears the mark of this relatively recent trend. Thus, it would be interesting to examine and locate it within the similar projects in other European cities, like London, Glasgow or Barcelona.

As part of the strategic planning for many urban areas to adapt to the new post-industrial era and adopt expanded service economies, urban regeneration plans started being implemented across Europe with two main purposes: an obvious one, to renovate and refurbish buildings of the industrial past for new purposes, and a less apparent, to find alternative financial sources, like the creation of enhanced employment opportunities and the attraction of foreign investment (Baniotopoulou, 2001). Such schemes were mostly advocated as moves towards environmental protection, or the improvement of the citizens' quality of life; nonetheless, in the search of profit, they have often become part and parcel of a tendency towards exploiting culture as a source of economic development in urban centres.

However, what is this that closely connects all regeneration plans with 'culture'? The short history of regeneration planning has shown that most of the times the cultural sector is to play the most crucial role in the new plans. 'Cultural re-development(s)' and 'cultural quarters' sprang in a number of cities in Europe, with the term 'culture' deliberately being left remotely vague (McGuigan, 1996). 'Culture' —from shopping to opera— is not only being financially exploited; there is also an emphasis to the changing image of the city. Dundee, with the city council's motto as 'the city of discovery', is seen to benefit by the combined offer of the now under refurbishment McManus, visitor attractions like Discovery Point and Verdant Works, as well as the role of the DCA, towards such a transformation from working-class into a city of culture, science and enterprise:

Backing on to the River Tay, the building sits only minutes from the home of Captain Scott's Discovery, the ship that has become the emblem of the city and the epitome of its new identity, with its international reputation for medical research and innovative creative media industries. Recognising the opportunity that a new art centre would offer to the regeneration of the city and the crucial role to be played in this of the cultural sector as a whole, Dundee City Council and Scottish Enterprise Tayside have given their full backing to the project from the outset (DCA, online, 2006).

The development of a contemporary art centre is seen as pivotal and complementary to market diversification and cultural regeneration. It also seems to be of universal validity, with examples like the Los Angeles Museum of Contemporary Art (MoCA), the Museu d'Art Contemporani de

Barcelona (MACBA), the Tate Modern in London and the Guggenheim Bilbao, to name but a few (Baniotopoulou, 2001). Even though contemporary art museums are not the core but only parts of much larger regeneration schemes, 'they nevertheless have come to be considered a *sine qua non* of every self-respecting regeneration plan' (Baniotopoulou, 2001; 1).

Dundee Contemporary Arts, at a smaller scale, represents a similar case: first, it has received international recognition and appraisal; second, it is a similar 'multi-space', with a diversity of functions and purposes; third, it has become the flagship contemporary art and film venue in Dundee; and last but not least, many of its educational and other policies, as will be discussed later, have been taken up as examples of good practice by the neighbouring McManus Galleries.

DCA forms the focal point of Dundee's 'cultural quarter'²⁸. According to Wynne (1996), apart from the historical ones such as Montmartre or Soho, most of the more recently formed cultural quarters have been used as tools for urban regeneration. It is interesting to note that in all of these new cases, art does not come on its own. Within the UK, cities like Glasgow, Newcastle or Dublin (Wynne, 1996), have successfully followed this model, by creating areas where art acts as a magnet, but comes combined with retail, entertainment and nightlife. Similarly in Dundee, the Overgate, a new commercial centre at the heart of the city, and a series of new international cuisine restaurants and bar-lounges have also become part of the city's new identity. The necessity for such public-private collaborations to become central to the city's 'face-lift', is reflected at the DCA's organisational structure.

Even though the discussions of the need for such a space in Dundee had started long before such regeneration schemes were being delivered, the opening of the DCA within the context of similar projects springing across Europe, raises important questions: can museums' and galleries' civic mission as bearers of culture and education go hand in hand with their exploitation as money-making tools? What are the reasons for the choice of a contemporary arts centre as the flagship organisation of a city's changed identity?

²⁸ A cultural quarter is an urban area with the highest concentration of cultural and leisure organisations (Wynne, 1992).

c. Fieldwork at the DCA



14. Educational sessions at the DCA activity room

The negotiations for research access at the DCA were long and arduous. Museum staff needed detailed justification for the examination of a number of aspects of the study. Eventually, the questionnaire was changed into a format DCA preferred and instead of my administering the survey as I did in the other sites, the DCA gallery assistants were to do the survey; DCA had ‘previous bad experience of research students in the gallery’, according to museum staff. Similarly, my field observations had to be limited to the educational sessions and workshops, rather than the galleries themselves.

The three exhibitions presented at the DCA during fieldwork were the following: the show by Grönlund/ Nisunen (18/12/04-27/02/05), two installation artists from Finland, playing with the conceptions of space, light, darkness and fluid architectural forms; the exhibition ‘Behind Closed Doors’ (12/3/05-1/5/05), a team exhibition of artworks that reflected upon hidden or secret histories of buildings; and finally, ‘Our Surroundings’ (14/5/05-17/7/05), an exhibition of seven artists’ newly-commissioned works with themes derived from the Dundee urban environment²⁹.

²⁹ Matt Stoke’s work ‘Long After Tonight’, a 16mm film, which documented the gathering of a group of northern soul fans from around the country in St Salvador’s church, Dundee, won the 2006 Becks Futures Award, a prestigious UK contemporary art prize. ‘Long After Tonight’ was presented at ICA, London (14/3- 1/5/2006). For more see ‘Judging panel’s heart captured by northern soul’, The Guardian, 3 May 2006.



15. Still from Matt Stokes's 'Long After Tonight'

The DCA educational provision covers a range of activities for people of all age; the focus, however, is mainly on school children and young people. According to the 'DCA Community and Education Programme' (October 2001), it aims, amongst others, to:

- Encourage participation and a 'have a go' attitude;
- Provide opportunities to learn new skills and techniques for making and exploring visual artworks;
- Generate ideas and opinions;
- Value and question those ideas and opinions;
- Apply or make a link to personal experience;
- Offer a 'quality experience' to all participants;
- Build long term relationships with key external organisations, aiding sustainability;
- Present outcomes, processes and participants via displays, exhibitions, events and seminars and offer opportunities for family/friends and others to share in the experience.

DCA's 'Education, Outreach and Interpretation Programme' comprises six separate elements: 'DCA Active', which offers artist-led sessions; 'Sunday Family Days' and taster workshops and tours for community groups and first time visitors; 'DCA Education', offering sessions for school groups; 'DCA Out and About', which develops longer term relationships with organisations and groups, including 'lengthy planning and training, tailoring approaches and materials, display of outcomes or work in progress' (DCA, online, 2006); 'DCA Film Development', offering animation workshops; 'DCA Interpretation', including gallery/ artists talks, events, activity sheets, tours; and, finally, 'DCA Online', presenting DCA's web based activity. According to its policy statement,

The Education, Outreach and Interpretation Policy is the means by which all levels of the community can access the range of facilities and opportunities offered by Dundee Contemporary Arts. It is DCA's core operation through which greater understanding and appreciation of contemporary visual arts, crafts and film can be achieved. It aims to facilitate access for all through socially inclusive programming (DCA, online, 2006).

According to the same document, all policy objectives 'will be subject to a regular review, monitoring and evaluation process'.

Apart from the organised programme, gallery assistants are meant to act as the main point of assistance to visitors. The gallery assistants' role is to invigilate exhibitions, but also actively encourage and support visitors' engagement with the exhibits. Most of them are art students or graduates from the Duncan and Jordanstone College of Art.

Nevertheless, the gallery assistants' interaction with the visitors is limited. In addition to the mystery of contemporary art, these young artists might sometimes unwillingly enhance visitors' secret fears; visitors do not just feel they lack understanding—they lack 'style'. Style, taste or the habitualised ease of moving around in a gallery space, the clothes they wear and the time they spend in front of the art works are constantly monitored, not by bored museum attendants, but by artists themselves, the producers and carriers of this alien world. Gallery assistants are arguably the embodiment of everything the visitor is not: their 'arty' habitus as distinctive of the visitors' 'ordinary' habituses.

Workshops sessions were organised for the Grönlund/ Nisunen exhibition as part of the 'Out and About' project, working with a group of adults with a variety of learning difficulties, and 'Route 15', a programme for young school-dropouts. Initially, the two groups worked separately; in the third session both groups came together to create a large printed frieze. After a quick tour around the exhibition, the groups would learn how to make prints at the DCA activity room. By the end of the programme and with the help of the two artists running the workshop, the atmosphere was friendly and the groups were interacting more and more. I also attended a series of other gallery talks and tours about the exhibitions, which were open to the public.

All sessions observed at the DCA had two components: first, they were 'hands-on' art workshops and, second, they had a strict structure. According to the Head of Education, during an induction for the benefit of the newly-joining gallery assistants, 'this is a very structured experience here, like school'. Indeed, planning and evaluation of the learning 'outcomes' are of primary importance for all sessions, which have clear descriptions, aims and objectives. Finally,

most of the educational offer is for young people, whereas there are also projects for people with disabilities (collaborations with the Dundee Society for the Visually Impaired, the Dundee Enablers Service Project, the Gap project for people with learning disabilities) and some projects for the older age groups (for example, the Third Age Digital Media Project). The focus of the arts workshops is usually inspired by the artworks on display. Most of them are free and their end-product is some kind of new art technique participants learn and artworks that they themselves produce. The meticulous planning of the sessions, the small number of participants and the enthusiasm of the young artists leading the workshops are important contributors to their success. In addition, the open space of the activity room, the views over the Tay River and the rolling programme of exhibitions and events constantly add new interest and enthusiasm to most of the participants in the educational programme of the DCA.

Finally, in terms of the interpretation and learning at the gallery, the DCA information room is usually equipped with videos with artists' interviews on their work or other related clips. There is also plenty of reading material regarding the artworks presented and their interpretation by art historians, critics or other artists. Most visitors enter this space before moving to the galleries.

The information room is the first and last point for most of the interpretation and explanation DCA gives to the often perplexed visitors in relation to their visit. With an interestingly designed space, where the walls can be moved and adjusted for the needs of each exhibition, the interpretation given in the gallery space is minimal. The unusual and the unknown, the ordinary and shocking, the innovative and moving of contemporary art, are all there for every visitor to make their own sense of. Most visitors are left on their own, being given few clues about the ways they could approach the exhibition. This is the white-cube³⁰ enigma, the mystery of contemporary art: for those who like it, to be wanting more — for those who do not, always to be left disillusioned:

This is probably because art viewing in modern art museums has always been organised by an elite, interested in addressing mainly the connoisseurs and neglecting public's needs. Thus, the latter would always be faced with the incomprehensible....This embarrassment

³⁰ 'White cube' galleries are those galleries characterised by their white walls, minimal interpretation and their 'extra-radical' contemporary art; the term was derived by the White Cube art gallery in London, which opened in 1993 and presented the work of Young British Artists (YBAs), like Tracey Emin and Damien Hirst.

of the many before the knowledge or intuitive understanding of modern art shared by the few can still be a powerful political tool. The less one understands of something the more imposing it becomes. (Baniotopoulou, 2001, 11).

d. Quantitative analysis, or DCA in numbers

In terms of examining Dundee Contemporary Arts in numbers, quantitative data presents a considerable majority of repeat visits (224) over the first time ones (96) (Fig. 2.1); this could, of course, reflect different visits for different purposes, like visiting the cinema or the bar³¹. In any case, DCA's visitors seem to be particularly loyal to it.

Moving on to the postcode data (Fig. 2.2), at least two thirds of DCA's visitors live in affluent localities; the rest live in relatively disadvantaged areas. Finally, in most cases, the missing postcode data (62 instances) is not to be attributed to a memory slippage, as was often the case in the McManus; some of the DCA visitors refused to disclose where they live.

Fig. 2.1 DCA- Frequency of visit

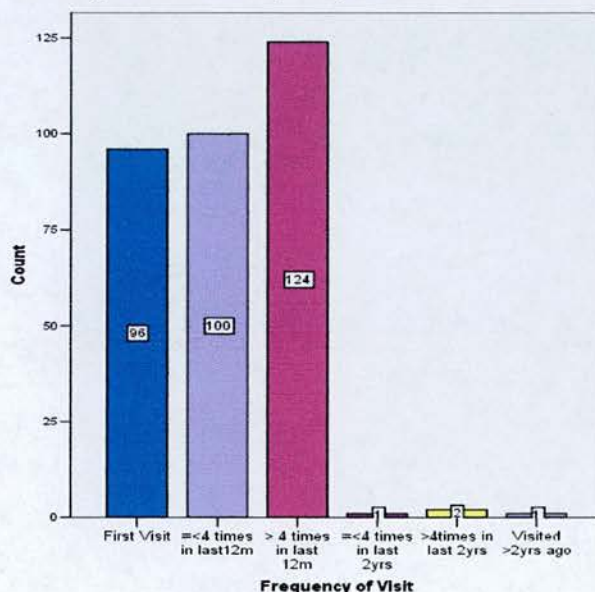
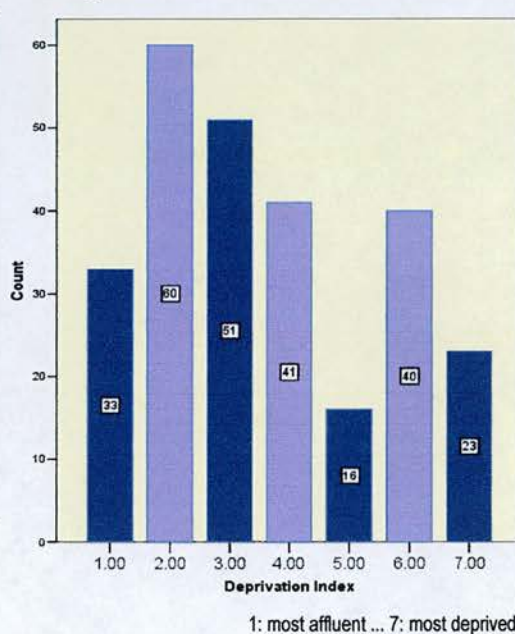


Fig. 2.2 DCA- Postcode data



³¹ Even though the questionnaire was distributed in the gallery space and visitors were asked to specifically answer in relation to their visits to the galleries, the large number of repeat visits might imply some scope for mistake about real numbers in this graph. Nonetheless, even taking the statistical mistake into account, the number of repeat visits definitely supersedes first timers.

Regarding gender (Fig. 2.3), there is an even balance between men and women visitors, whereas two thirds (201) of them are below the age of 35 (Fig. 2.4); DCA's constituency consists of people of a younger generation. McManus, on the contrary, presented a more even distribution across age groups.

Fig. 2.3 DCA- Gender

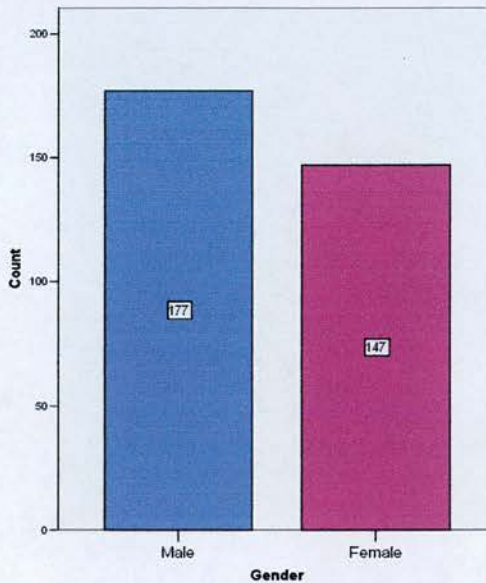
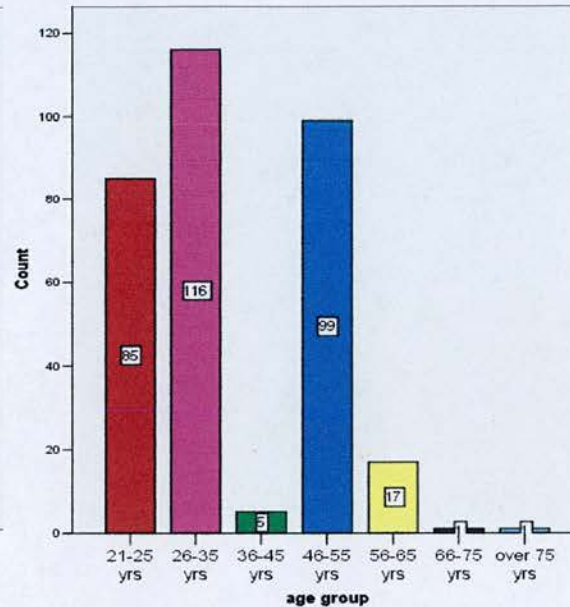


Fig. 2.4 DCA- Age



Therefore, DCA visitors could be profiled as relatively young people (up to 35 years old), living in the richer areas of the city and, as we will see, are usually of a high income and well educated. They visit DCA frequently to see the new exhibitions, they attend gallery talks, they watch European cinema and occasionally, on a Saturday night, they have a drink there as well; the multifunctionality of the DCA as an arts centre, but mainly as a place to see and be seen, accords with the taste of this relatively new and 'up-market' section of the Dundee population. According to one of the interviewees, AG., female, keen museum visitor and amateur poet:

When I go to say McManus it reminds me of my childhood and it reminds me of looking back, in the past and looking back into Dundee's history and get a sense of what was happening before. When I come here to the DCA, it is very much forward looking to me and it is looking at the present and the future more. I think I like it here because you get artists from lots of different places and there are challenging boundaries and allowing you

to think about things in new ways. It is art that it is constantly re-working and re-imagining what art is. And is challenging I think to see how we understand ourselves and our world, yes. Whereas I find that the things that I see in the McManus are more traditional and more things that I grew up being used to, in school, at home... but here it is more challenging.

In relation to the occupational groups DCA visitors belong to (Fig. 2.5), the difference from the McManus Galleries is even starker: out of a total of 324 visitors, more than half were professionals and senior officials (168), 37 of them were involved in administration and sales, only 5 were blue collar workers and the rest of them (114) were students, reflecting the close connections of the art centre to the Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art.

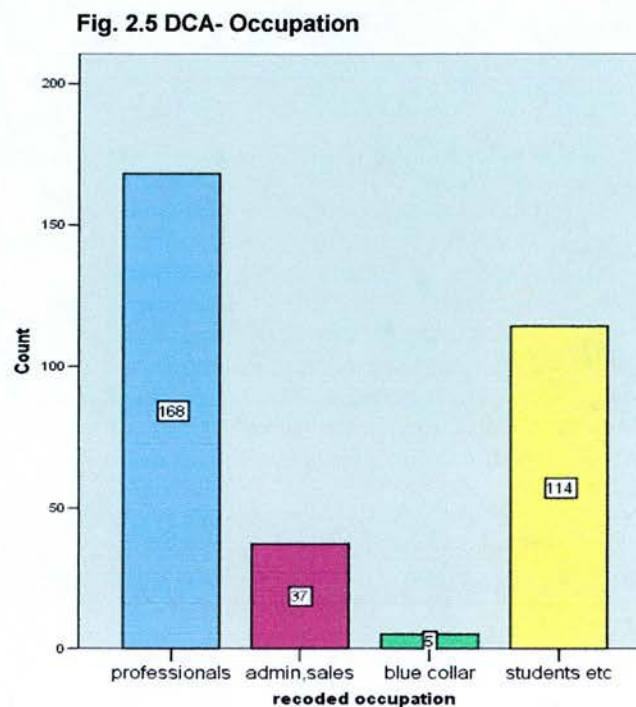


Fig. 2.6 Leaving education age: age groups

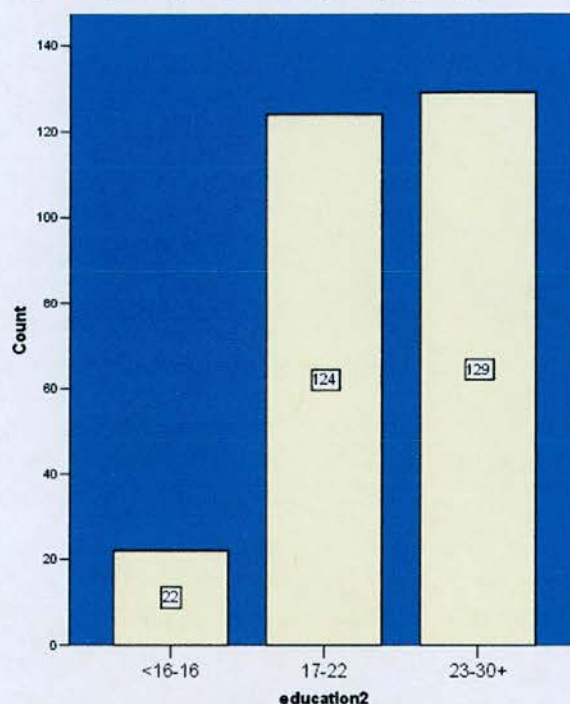
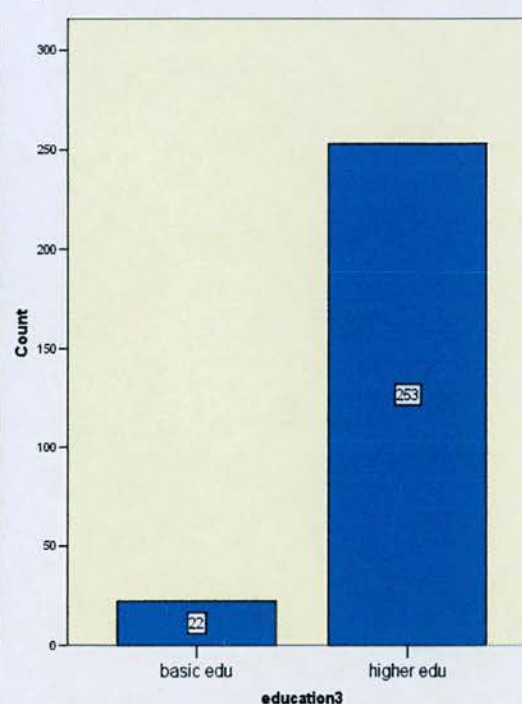


Fig. 2.7 Leaving education age: levels of education



Further, in relation to the DCA visitors' educational background (Fig. 2.6, Fig. 2.7), the vast majority (253) had had a higher or Further Education qualification. Despite the significant number of cases of missing information (51), the number of people who had only completed compulsory schooling was just 22. Hence, apart from having high professional status and living in relatively affluent areas, DCA visitors also belong to the more well-educated sections of the Dundee society.

Finally, it should be noted that DCA omitted the ethnicity question from the questionnaire. The reason for this, according to the marketing officer, was that DCA does not accept that issues such as ethnicity differentiate its visitors. During the initial discussions to secure access to the site, I also had to strongly argue my case for the significance of the questions regarding occupational and educational status; the staff argued that, DCA does not see its visitors in this way. After lengthy correspondence and negotiations, these questions were to be included, if the ethnicity question was omitted.

Indeed, the questionnaire survey at the DCA started almost a month later than in the other sites. I was not allowed to conduct the survey myself as I did in the McManus Galleries and Dundee Heritage Trust; DCA staff re-assured me that it would become part of the standard questionnaire they were already using to collect data for their purposes. However, the gallery assistants were resistant towards delivering the survey. First, it meant additional work for them, since, as a result, the questionnaire had now become much longer than before. Secondly, with most of them being artists themselves, many of them had a firm belief for the arts as open to all, irrespective of structural preconditions; hence their resistance to ask questions in respect to visitors' educational background or occupation.

In general, increased professionalism and a requirement to control all aspects of the research were predominant throughout the fieldwork at the DCA. Most interestingly, the structure of the research was not discussed merely with the education department of the arts centre; after an initial meeting, most arrangements and access negotiations had to be done with the DCA's marketing team.



16. DCA

e. The DCA educational provision: 'Whoever wants can come along'

This section concentrates on the interview conducted with the Head of Education at the DCA.

After some background information regarding the interviewee's experience in her current post, the discussion concentrated on the policy, planning and funding of the educational activities. One of the areas of discussion related to changes in policy and strategy over the recent past that impacted on the arts' centre educational activities:

Regarding changes in the educational policy, although it hasn't changed, it has been reviewed twice. I developed and added aims to it in 2001 to stop myself becoming mad because the policy said that we had to do all things to all visitors. Because the demand was so high, I tried to give it some structure, regarding funding, people's role in the organisation and educational activities....You will see from the policy that it is structured in education, outreach and interpretation so it is about a wider range of activities. We don't have a specific educational policy.

With the first access negotiations being re-directed from the education department to marketing, one of the issues raised was the relationship between the education and the marketing sections of the DCA:

90% of the education programme deals with people who haven't come to the building before. The marketing the DCA does is very limited by its budget and its target marketing is usually very different. Education and marketing wouldn't target the same audiences, but if you want to develop an audience, marketing needs to work with the education department. It is just a very simple equation....The relationship between education and the marketing strategy is constantly developing, possibly changing and coming closer together....The Arts Council were interested in looking how the education and the marketing department could work closer together.

On the other hand, it was also mentioned that,

Things work very much through networks here. Dundee is a small place that depends on word of mouth. It is not the Community programme's job to market to non-visitors. In my head there is a very clear distinction between roles. The aim between marketing and education is the same but the objectives are very different. Education objectives are different from marketing objectives.

Regarding the funding for the educational work in the arts' centre, the education officer commented:

All counts as education and learning as part of our core activity anyway, so we are core funded. I think that probably there is a cultural shift in funders, certainly in Scotland, in the last three years. Education is not additional funding anymore; it is funded as a core activity. But education doesn't make money; it might help you get a lottery bid, it might help you retain your core funding but it won't get you any additional funding.

Further, in terms of the management aspect of administering such a multidimensional organisation, DCA's organisational structure —the partnership of a higher education institution, a local authority and a private company— was discussed. According to the interviewee, this type of collaboration has proven successful, both in terms of the multiplicity and variety of offer, as well as the increase of visitor numbers and local interest:

DCA Ltd is an unusual partnership between Dundee City Council who owns the building, Dundee Ltd who operates the building and University of Dundee who owns the lower part of the building, the visual arts centre. Jute café/bar is a franchise that has a contract with the DCA Ltd for an x-number of years. This is a quite unusual co-operation amongst a local authority, a higher education institution and a limited company, charity³².

After the discussion about strategic and organisational aspects and their influence upon the educational offer of the arts centre, the discussion moved to matters of immediate relevance to the educational programmes, the formal or informal educational provision as well as issues of outreach or non-participation. The interviewee started by explaining the limitations of the DCA educational programming in relation to outreach activities:

We are wildly under-resourced for what we do staffing-wise. So there are limits of off-site work we can do. What we usually do, is that we go off-site, meet the groups, the schools, present them with the art work, but then always bring them here to see DCA. Then we present the outcomes of their work in the DCA.

...

You can't bring more and more people in if you don't have the resources to keep them. So the aim is that we take demand and interest from people, give them encouragement and support and then they will eventually become independent visitors on their own...Of course people might choose not to come back and that's fine, you can't expect everyone to like contemporary art themes.

³² Regarding this partnership, it is also enlightening to examine its logic according to the DCA's website (online, 2006): 'The partnership of the three bodies and the coexistence of facilities in the building of course have practical and financial benefits. They also allow for shared expertise and the enormous potential for breaking down barriers not just between artforms, most significantly art and film, but also between production and presentation, between private research and public display'.

Following up from the interviewee's very last comment, a DCA-specific question was asked regarding a prevalent idea in Dundee: DCA's exhibitions have been characterised by many as elitist, too 'minimalist', or 'totally incomprehensible'. As will be shown in the next chapter, many research participants shared this view. The education officer said:

We have many groups coming from Whitfield, Charleston, retired groups, over 55 groups....The education programme is to get them in the building so that they then have the *choice* of coming or not. We still expect 50% or more to say that's not for me... The kind of people we are talking about is people who live in Whitfield and they have never seen the River Tay in their life. There was this guy once, his first view of the river was in the DCA from the activity room window. This is how isolated people are. But the fact that they come here, they have a cup of tea, they do some activities, they see the artworks –they act almost like an ambassador group, they go to other people and say it is great. We may be elitist, we may *appear* elitist to people unless they come here and experience what we do... However, it is a white cube and it is quite a scary building. With education we want to give people an assisted and supported first experience, so in a way it is marketing as well.

This is an account of some of the reasons social groups might have for disliking contemporary art. Having a taste for contemporary art is arguably seen as a matter of choice or decision, whilst other factors, like isolation, are also considered: according to the interviewee, people have the right to say 'that's not for me'. Nonetheless, even though people do indeed have the right to make their own decisions, considering art appreciation as a matter of taste could be a risky path to follow in a still predominantly working class city like Dundee. The introduction of social groups to the DCA exhibitions does not necessarily mean that the latter are re-negotiated under the interaction with those groups formerly excluded from the gallery. At the same time, with museum education theory developing discourses around the 'needs' of individual visitors, it could easily be inferred that preferring not to visit becomes a matter of personal choice, rather than the gallery's responsibility to create meaningful educational experiences for those groups. Whilst DCA does work with many community groups from disadvantaged areas, it is indeed an assisted, very structured experience, controlled mainly by the gallery staff. As will be shown in the next chapter, some of the research interviewees had had similar experiences at the DCA; most of them though were still very doubtful, while others re-asserted the reasons of their dislike.

The main argument for a smaller-scale programme of outreach work is the lack of staff and resources at the DCA. The claim is not new; most museums and galleries suffer from similar scarcity of means. The problem with organised educational programmes is the fact that they can and will only address a certain number of people; resources cannot but be limited. The usual

education cycle followed by most successful art galleries (or museums in that matter), is mounting an exhibition with a topic of current interest, organising a well-structured educational programme and its delivery, conducting evaluation and reporting, and applying and securing funding for the next educational programme —and on it goes. However, at least with the case of the DCA and as will be shown in the following chapter, most of the research participants do not feel that they can have any connections (meaningful to them) with ‘what is on offer’.

In terms of the student population and the local community groups (members of which were the majority of the research interviewees), the museum worker gave her own reasons for their non-participation:

We get a lot of graduate students, not current students. Drinks are expensive. We don't get people from community groups either; coffee and tea are too expensive, in community centres they cost 20p. These are determining factors.

Regarding the specific constituencies that DCA educational work aims at, educational opportunities for adults or the ways they try to attract non-visitors, the education officer said:

I would say that we do not actively try to attract non-visitors to educational activities. This is a job of the marketing department....We actively do not target non-visitors because we can't deal with them. If we did and we generated a demand that we can't deal with then what do we do?...Dundee is very well served in terms of adult education in that it has community centres, supported learning, it has the University of Dundee with the Continuing Education Department, a lively service in Dundee which supports community learning very well. Dundee City Council has re-launched a department which is called Communities Department, which has set up an adult learning committee focused on literacy. Therefore, I decided that I won't do anything else other than talks and gallery tours and that's where I stopped.

Instead, educational provision focuses more on:

For us youngsters 14-25 is an area that we don't know much of and an area we target.

In terms of the ethnic minority population in Dundee, she said:

The Arts Council asks us to work with minority groups, but we are inclusive. I refuse to work that way, whoever wants can come along...

Arguing for DCA not exclusively focusing its work on the local population, the education officer stressed the arts centre's national and international significance:

We attract visitors from Edinburgh, Aberdeen, the whole of Tayside and the Eastern area of Scotland, Perth, Dumfries and Galloway, England, Newcastle and London. Therefore we have a local, regional, national and even international role because through internet connections we are in contact with artists...But our policy is not dependent by our funders and our delivery is not dependent by our funders either...Dundee Ltd is also agreeing on quality rather than quantity.

Hence, similarly to the McManus, the focus of the organised educational offer is young people; adult groups are considered as catered for by other organisations in the city. On the other hand, ethnic minority groups are not seen as any different from the rest of the population; in the name of inclusion, or —to be accurate— its reverse side, there is no reason to privilege them over other social groups. Finally, the education officer stressed DCA's national and international character, attempting to explain the DCA's lack of educational programming for local community groups.

Apart from the organised educational programmes, I asked the interviewee about what she sees as informal learning in the gallery space:

There are many separate things, I think; the gallery which has an exhibition and a certain culture to it, a curator who has an idea...This is a learning opportunity connected with curatorial practice. The second learning opportunity is the actual practice practice, either one artist's work or collective exhibitions... The third learning opportunity is someone in the gallery, where there is the gallery assistant... Haven't you seen exhibitions where teachers are completely rigid because this is a gallery of contemporary art? They are struggling. They come in with their preconceptions that they are stupid, that they are not going to understand anything. If the visitor comes in the gallery unsupported, they spend 30 seconds in the gallery space, then no they are not going to learn anything....Gallery assistants are all very approachable people...You are struggling however with the preconceptions of the visitors that somebody in a uniform is a security attendant.

What the education officer regards as informal learning in the gallery is first of all, the specific topic of the exhibition and the narrative constructed around it by the curator; second, the art works and their interpretation as bearers of cultural meaning and symbolic language; and third, the role of the gallery assistant in the exhibition space, as one who can answer questions and discuss with visitors about the exhibition.

Because we chose to work in this that is being called a community and education programme, I would say it a structured approach, something like a protect zone. ...

In relation to current discourses about attending to the needs of the independent visitor, the education officer commented:

Older people, for example, like to come in groups. The group thing is a part of our culture. People learn in schools together with other people. The independent learning is something new. There is a very bizarre learning culture that expects from people to move from a social, happy learning experience to something that they would do on their own.

Finally, the discussion moved into the area of the difference between education and learning. The interviewee spoke about the meanings of 'lifelong learning' and 'informal learning', 'inclusion' or 'empowerment'. She said:

Education and learning are such loaded terms. Education is about acquiring skills. If you do learning you mean that people are less able, or that they are in a structured learning. They do not have a formal curriculum. There are a lot of politically loaded terms as well now: lifelong learning, access, even the word creativity is now used in several documents for political reasons, creative industries etc. But we do speak about publicly funded institutions, here for example we are funded by the University, the Council... We have a community space that aims at people having learning experiences, and what happens when you present nudity, sexual issues? I mean we can present all kinds of socially unacceptable issues, what would happen if our funders objected to it? There are also preconceptions about contemporary visual art, about what is appropriate and what is inappropriate.

Finally, as an afterword:

When you work somewhere you have your professional view, then you have your DCA view and you also have your personal view... My professional and DCA view is what I told you before. My personal view is that education has been used as a cure to everything, to marketing, to social inclusion, access... We have another term now, the cultural entitlement, by the Cultural Commission, everyone is entitled to culture... The government says everyone is entitled to cultural activities.... The bottom line is to be able to affect individuals positively and change social attitudes. The minute you don't do that you just push people through, like teachers push pupils through exams. As long as we don't do that then we are fine.



17. Gallery visitors

f. Dundee Contemporary Arts: concluding remarks

Fieldwork at the DCA became a challenging endeavour to delve into the educational possibilities of a well-organised and multidimensional cultural facility. High levels of professionalism, planning and organisation, collaboration across departments and an active education team were all aspects of the DCA work, apparent from the early steps of establishing research access. On the other hand, staff's concerns for the privacy of visitors' experiences in the gallery space, their unease with 'student' research and possibly the increased chances of an independent study questioning established practices, sometimes seemed to threaten the inclusion of DCA as a case study in the research. Nevertheless, once access was agreed and fieldwork began, DCA staff offered their support in formulating some crucial insights into its educational offer:

- **DCA as the symbol of the new, regenerated Dundee:** DCA, following the example of numerous other contemporary art galleries in several cities in Europe and the UK, carries the trademark of a progressive, innovative space which combines leisure and culture under the same roof. Hence, contemporary art serves as the symbol of progress and a radical outlook which connects Dundee not only with other cultural hubs like Edinburgh and London but further afield. The art presented at the DCA, in combination with its film shows, print studios, retail choice and deli-food and drink, seem to be freeing Dundee from its roots in an industrial, poverty-stricken past, towards a new future of enterprise, culture and science. According to one of the DCA sponsors,

A night at DCA is an excellent and memorable opportunity for our partners to entertain their clients in a relaxing and enjoyable environment. It reinforces the message that we are innovative and contemporary in our philosophy (DCA, online, 2006).

Nonetheless, the DCA audience is not representative of the local population. Professionals, managers and students are the vast majority of its visitors. Therefore, given the unpopularity of the DCA amongst the lower social strata, who is included and who excluded from this development? Further, how dangerous the art appreciation argument is when it naturalises the unequal structural determinants of participation? DCA is changing Dundee's image, but for whom?

- The **public-private partnership** between the local council, the university and a private company. DCA was the first gallery in the city to be introducing such a partnership between public and private organisations, giving the example for other similar collaborations in the city. Such a collaboration marks the beginning of a different era, that of a fusion of the public with the commercial.
- The **continuum of the educational and marketing work**: Marketing at the DCA is an integral aspect of the work of the gallery. It aims at broadening DCA's appeal in the city and nationally, by expanding its sponsor/ client-base. It is also in charge of attracting non-visitors and works closely with the education department. The education officer at the DCA spoke about the Scottish Arts Council requiring such a close collaboration; education needs to be marketed, in order to be considered 'relevant'. It is core, as long as it is 'delivered' for optimum customer satisfaction and can therefore secure further funding. The question is, given the public-private base of the gallery, who are its target groups? The education officer commented that lack of funding and staff limits their work with excluded groups to only responding to demand. Given the non-representation of the local population in the museum despite seven years of award-winning educational/ marketing work, what is the social background of those non-visitors 'targeted'? In what ways has marketing at the DCA been successful, when participation of broader social groups is scarce? In other words, would marketing ever systematically attract those with a limited budget?

- The **structured educational experience**: Despite the informal, creative nature of educational work in the gallery space, DCA offers a very structured experience, similar to formal education. Professionalism and accountability are an inherent aspect of educational work in the gallery; evaluation of previous work secures resources for the planning of educational programming for the future.
- The **focus on young people**: Like the McManus Galleries, most of the educational programmes target younger, mainly disadvantaged, people. This concentration of efforts aims at enhancing young people's confidence, especially school drop-outs, in order to possibly channel them into alternative educational routes; ultimately, the aim is an enjoyable educational experience that might result in their inclusion back into formal education or employment. In this sense, education is measured against 'objectives' and 'outcomes'.
- The mostly **art-based nature of the workshops**: Again, similarly to McManus, all educational activities are oriented towards hands-on art practice, inspired by the artworks exhibited. The focus is more on the actual art created during the session in the activity room, rather than on thinking and discussing on the basis of the exhibited artworks. Contemporary art, despite its ineligibility at times, can, through discussion and sharing of ideas and perspectives, offer meaningful opportunities for critical thinking, dialogue and alternative readings of historical phenomena. The predominant 'learning by doing' of contemporary gallery education, is not in balance with 'learning by thinking' with art, artists and their challenging interpretations of reality.
- The use of **terminology**: According to the education officer, DCA does not have a single educational policy covering all aspects of its offer. Instead, there are three strands: 'DCA Education' covers work with formal schooling, 'DCA Outreach' is for adult groups and 'DCA Interpretation' aims at gallery visitors. Would adult or community groups be so suspicious of 'education' or 'learning' in the gallery, or is it that 'outreach' is not about education anyway?
- The **national and international perspective**: DCA has the unique position of one of the few galleries north of the Border that has presented such an interesting array of international

contemporary art to the Scottish audience. However, what is the position of DCA in relation to local artists? Interview data showed that there have been many concerns regarding the absence of local artists presenting their work in the galleries. The partnership between the arts centre and the University was to foster the production of art at a local level – can and will DCA’s international significance nurture local talent as well?

- The **problem of contemporary art**: Finally, what is the problem with contemporary art? What are the reasons of the resistance of the local population towards the art presented at the DCA? On the other hand, why is it that a contemporary arts centre was chosen as the symbol of Dundee’s new image? Despite claims for widening of art galleries and museums towards broader and lower social groups, why is it that possibly the most ‘difficult’ and unpopular art form was chosen for Dundee’s new cultural hub? Thinking with Bourdieu, is distinction amongst social strata reduced or enhanced with such policies and what is the role of cultural capital in the participation in the new (McManus included) museums and galleries in the city?

3. Dundee Heritage Trust



18. RRS Discovery

19. Inside Verdant Works

a. Short historical background

Dundee Heritage Trust was founded in January 1985 with a charitable status; its main aim is to 'preserve and present Dundee's industrial past' (DHT, online, 2006). It is in charge of the Royal Research Ship Discovery at Discovery Point, and Verdant Works, an industrial museum presenting the history of the jute industry in Dundee. The independent status of the Trust suggests that it operates as a 'private' organisation and therefore receives limited funding from the local authorities, the government and museum organisations.

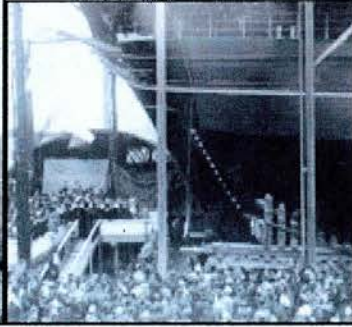
The Trust's status, its funding situation and the nature of both museums as 'visitor attractions', also suggest that, apart from the locals and tourists, Dundee Heritage Trust targets Dundee's private sector, in order to secure sponsorship. Indeed, the 'trust'-based organisational structure has been a determining factor for its provision to the local public. For example, according to the Trust's website,

The support of the business community is essential to the continued success of Dundee Heritage Trust. To this end, we provide commercially attractive packages which make sound business sense for a company to sign up to. Through our Corporate Member's Scheme your own staff, existing clients, potential customers and visiting dignitaries can all make use of our facilities, giving them a positive, interesting and cultural experience (DHT, online, 2006).

b. Discovery Point Antarctic Museum and Verdant Works



20. RRS Discovery



21. 1901- Discovery embarks



22. Captain Scott

Robert Falcon Scott was the commander of the National Antarctic Expedition (1901-1904), having sailed on the RRS Discovery from Britain to Antarctica on the 6th of August 1901; together with Shackleton and Wilson, they set to reach the South Pole. The survivors of the adventure were welcomed back in Britain as national heroes. Discovery Point still treats Scott as one:

Had we lived, I should have had a tale to tell of the hardihood (*sic*), endurance and courage of my companions which would have stirred the heart of every Englishman. These rough notes and our dead bodies must tell the tale...(DHT, online, 2006).



23. Captain Scott mannequin in Discovery

RRS Discovery was built by the Dundee Shipbuilders' Company for the Royal Geographical Society. Dundee had a very good reputation in ship-building, thanks to its whaling fleet. Discovery was launched into the Tay River on the 21 March 1901, only to come back 85 years later, in 1986, and become the symbol of the city's regeneration.



24. The old Verdant Works

Verdant Works, on the other hand, is a restored 19th century jute mill, from the times when the jute industry was at its peak in Dundee: by 1864, there were 61 spinning and power looms working in the city and the nearby village Lochee. It is situated at one of the earliest urban industrial areas in Scotland, since the water supply from the 'Scouring Burn' provided with the steam power to run the machinery. Verdant was one of the smaller jute mills, with Cox Brothers' Camperdown Works —the 282ft tall brick chimney of which can still be seen from miles away— Logie Works and Seafield Works being the major employers in the city.

The High Mill of Verdant Works was built in 1833 for David Lindsay, a merchant and flaxspinner. Warehouses, batching areas and offices were added during the next 30 years, giving to Verdant more or less the appearance it has today.

The first steps towards creating a textile museum in Dundee started in 1982, when the Abertay Historical Society formed a working group towards this. In 1985, when Dundee Heritage Trust was founded, one of its primary aims was to preserve Dundee's industrial past. In November

1988 it was decided that Verdant Works, at the heart of Dundee's former industrial area, would be the best site to create a working museum, while parts of the Dundee's jute history was still in living memory. Indeed, many volunteers in the museum, retired workers from the jute mills of Dundee, offer their memories and knowledge to the visitors of the museum. The site was purchased in 1991 and the museum opened its doors to the public in 1996.

c. In the field – Fieldwork account in Discovery Point and Verdant Works

Fieldwork began in both sites around January 2005. From the beginning, both museums presented a very different picture compared to McManus Galleries or the DCA. Very soon it became obvious that staff at Dundee Heritage Trust had a different attitude towards visitors, who were often treated more like customers than visitors of the museums. Later on, I found out that the words 'customers' and 'visitors' would often be used interchangeably by the front of house staff.

One of the most striking educational and exhibitionary elements of both museums is their interactive displays, namely touch screens or hands-on exhibits. In a way, both Discovery Point and Verdant Works are sites which do not display a big number of historical artefacts; the ship and the working mill are themselves the display, the site and the artefact presented to the visitors. Therefore, in order to tell the stories of the expedition to the Antarctica or of the jute, both spaces have been transformed into museums where history is constructed as a continuous narrative through the use of videos and interactives.

At Discovery, the ship forms the main display. Visitors are toured around by volunteers dressed up as sailors; adjacent to it, there is a rotunda building which houses the shop, café, offices and also large exhibition areas giving all the background to the story of the Discovery.



25. Museum volunteer at
Discovery

The visitors follow a route from the first planning stages of the expedition all the way to the actual journey itself; a series of videos with dramatised dialogues between the key 'participants' regarding the planning of the expedition, details about the construction of the ship, the different parts of it, the supplies for the expedition and final preparations, are part of the story told through touch screen displays, maquettes, photographs, and museum mannequins.



26. Mannequins presenting scenes from the expedition in Antarctica

Most visitors seemed very keen on watching the short films about the history of Discovery:

18 February

Big screening room, equivalent to cinema space, the film starts every half an hour; it is the film on the British Antarctic Survey. Seems quite busy, with many visitors waiting outside the room for the next show. While waiting there is another video they can watch on the first months of the journey. It feels like a multiplex.

Most visitors seemed engaged with the displays. The interactive exhibits were mainly used by children; most of the times, when an adult would handle them, it would be in order to show something to their children. A lot of visitors seemed keen on going to the ship; I was asked time and again if there is a lot more to see before reaching the ship. The space is fairly limited; on a busy day, Discovery could become crowded and quite noisy:

16 March

The museum is full of people, there are three buses parked outside. With all the videos playing at the same time, visitors' discussions, sounds from the interactive exhibits, it is almost bewildering. The open area from the museum towards the ship is full of people taking photos; the shop is full of tourists buying souvenirs.



27. Discovery: Inside the museum

Regarding the educational offer for adults, no sessions with community groups in the museum were delivered during fieldwork; most groups visiting were schools, being given a tour around the museum.

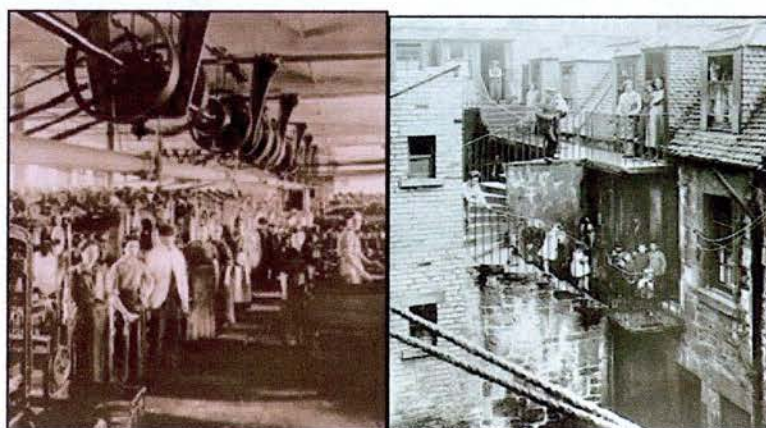


28. Verdant Works: reception, mannequins and museum volunteer

In Verdant Works, even though the theme here is different, the means for the presentation are similar.

To start off, *Juteopolis* is a thirteen-minute video show³³ which forms the first part of the tour in the museum. Combining old footage, local songs and historical fact, it introduces visitors to the story of jute and the reasons for Dundee becoming *Juteopolis*. The experience of the fieldwork in the museum shows that the overwhelming majority of the visitors watch it with great interest. *Juteopolis* is a significant part of the visit, in the sense that it gives visitors the very first idea of what they are about to see in the exhibition. In addition, and more importantly, it sets visitors, and especially those that do not have personal experiences of jute, in a highly particular frame of mind.

In the following section, an examination of a specific museum narrative in Verdant Works is developed, in order to show how history is constructed in the exhibition space. I am using critical discourse analysis to explain some of the implicit and explicit meanings the video communicates to the visitors of Verdant Works, in relation not only to the jute industry but more or less Dundee's social history of the 19th and early 20th century.



29. The Juteopolis

³³ Produced in 1996 by the company 'Slight Shift' for Verdant Works, running time: 13 min, Edinburgh.



30. Juteopolis: entrance to the audio-visual theatre

Juteopolis

Having comfortably sat in the theatre, the visitor is initially struck by the male narrator's broad Dundee accent; the person talking is not an outsider. He is 'one of us' – but who are 'we'? A local sense of pride is constructed from the very first sentences of the narrative:

'Edinburgh and Stirling³⁴ both have high places from where the citizens have a broad view of life, but Dundee snuggles against the perfect tower of rock from where one can see the chimneys all around the city. This is the vision Dundee men carry to the ends of the earth, no wonder that they always go back there some day'.

Such an introduction works at multiple levels. First of all, it sets the context ('chimneys'), but also 'wins over' the two different audiences the video is addressed at; the locals, flattered by Dundee's superiority to the other Scottish cities; and the tourists, mainly economic migrants visiting their homeland 'from the ends of the earth'. The description goes further:

The setting of the city is stunningly beautiful, so beautiful that it was given the name *Donum Dei*, gift of God.

Not so. According to Scott, 'the name Dundee derives from early Gaelic 'dun' meaning either hill or fort and 'Daig', presumably an early local chief' (1999; 10). Interestingly, the narrative chooses a romantic etymological version, rather than the more mundane one.

Briefly giving the background of the jute history in Dundee, the narrative starts from the city's early years, from its founding in the 13th century and throughout the middle ages. Apparently, jute industry was preceded by 'merchant *dynasties*'. It is interesting to examine how the history in the centuries before

³⁴ Italics are used in order to give emphasis to words or phrases of particular interest for the analysis.

the booming of the jute industry is constructed. It is a world of dynasties, the successful ancestors of the later jute barons.

The town's hand-loom fever had grown with the intellectual fever of the age of revolution in America and France. But *their independence did not appeal to a new breed of entrepreneurs*, who began to organise themselves out of their cottages and into weaving shops and in order to impose discipline, a toll order for men used to being their own masters.

This is not a city of rebels or workers; this is a city of entrepreneurs. And when the whole world is shaken by massive popular movements, these *men* (sic) prefer hard labour and discipline. However, historians have given a completely different perspective on the ways revolutionary ideas influenced the society of Dundee, one that does not find a place in this narrative:

New political ideas emanating from France and from America...put down firm roots in Dundee. The movement for radical reform and for a more egalitarian society, strong throughout Scotland, took a firm grip of Dundee, which came to be known as the 'Radical Toun' (Scott, 1999:33).

And the video narrative continues:

The power looms developed. It was *obvious* that a new order would prevail, based on child and female labour. When factory commissioners entered the mills in the 1830s undernourished and undersized children as young as nine were found working up to 16 hours a day; *the bairns no doubt consoled themselves with the contributions they were making to Britain's imperial glory.*

The reason for the higher percentage of women in employment in Dundee was the fact that they were cheaper to employ (Scott, 1999), nonetheless this is not part of the account. History's injustices are naturalised, they become 'obvious', 'necessary', 'natural'. Even children's 'blood money'³⁵ is a rightful cause in the service of the British imperialistic project, a well-known populist ploy used for the legitimisation of domestic or colonial exploitation.

The narrative goes on to describe the era of the establishment of Dundee as *Juteopolis* and both the problems and the benefits of industrialisation:

As the city was industrialised, dozens of mills like the Verdant sprang. Some of the new works are *most imposing structures, palatial in appearance, colossal in extent and endurability, magnificence and comfort unsurpassed by the mills in any other town in the kingdom or any country in the world.* The jute barons also built *fabulous mansions* in Perth

³⁵ 'Even as late as 1890s children were being beaten in Dundee jute mills to hurry them to earn a premium known as "blood money"' (Scott, 1999:57).

Road, Broughty Ferry and increasingly in country estates far from the communities in Dundee which generated their wealth....(song)... In Juteopolis people's lives were determined by jute to an extent difficult to imagine today.

Notice the paratactic structure of the clause and the deliberate use of '*imposing*', '*palatial*' and '*colossal*' in order to give emphasis to the significance of the mills for the city. As for the '*magnificence and comfort unsurpassed*' it is a shame that, according to Patrick Geddes, famous Scottish biologist and town planner, writing in 1909, it had to open its doors to 'that misery of labour, and particularly of woman, which makes Dundee the very hades of the industrial world, and of which the consequences and aggravations, in bad housing, in disease and mortality bills both of adults and of infants, are in those terrible returns of insanity, vice and crime....as to demand an explanation and invite a corresponding special inquiry' (1909; 64). There is no such issue discussed here; instead of any sort of reasoning, more of a 'that's life' explanation is given for the gloom industrialisation brought to Dundee. In one of the interviews done in the museum, a similar viewpoint to that of Geddes's emerged through the discussion:

-Yes, this was the one side of the story that was not told here today, the inequalities and the poverty. What was given was a more romantic side; they looked at the good points (VA, f. 57).

-They didn't even have enough money to feed their children, yi ken? It wasn't the good old days, these were awful days (V, m, 60).

An account of another interviewee contrasts strongly to the video narrative:

Verdant Works and all these places show you only the best, you follow what I mean? They show you only what the jute industry was supposed to be like but the reality was that if you saw the people...They were four and five feet tall, because they didn't even have the food to grow, and then the air...What they call the stour and dust, you know, and the smell, the stuff...Oh, the air was absolutely polluted (P, m, 68).

According to *Juteopolis*:

The *sweet* smell of jute was the *city's perfume*, a head and body smell as the city's working and living environment became one.

I am going to conclude by looking at the way the Dundee women and migrant workers are portrayed, along with the jute barons. Women, even though, as later stated, 'a matriarchal society developed', still have the traditional role of up-keeping the city; no mention is given to women's strikes or to the Dundee suffragette movement arising in those years. The image of the women of Dundee comes in sharp contrast to the one of the textile magnets and their gifts to them:

On the streets and in the works the mill lassies were described as *loud, disordered and hard* girls, accused of *indecent* conduct; *anarchy* and *lack of discipline* were their characteristics. Yet, the sewing girls grew up to become the women of Dundee that *kept the social fabric* of the city intact...Nevertheless the *quality of living* in Dundee was enhanced; the city's art collection is *superb*, parks such as Lochee and Baxter Park were laid out, the *Caird Hall*, the *Technical Institute* and *University College* were all *endowed by textile magnates*.

The level of specificity here regarding the philanthropic donations to the city, shows how preferred information is given in over-complete, detailed ways. On the other hand, information regarding popular discontent, class-based conflict and the Chartist movement (Whatley et. al., 1993), are all seen as irrelevant and thus silenced. On the contrary, the owners of the factories are mentioned again and again throughout the video. These are some of the descriptions used for them: '*merchant dynasties*', '*entrepreneurs*', '*jute barons*' and '*textile magnates*'. This form of lexicalisation signals their power in multiple ways, their political, social and economic position against the, sometimes even patronising and very few, references to the mill workers: '*mill lassies*', '*bear weavers*', '*snuffy spinners*'. Even worse, the South Asian migrants who worked in the mills are totally ignored. This is the story an Indian lady shared in her interview in the museum.

My husband used to work here and my son as well. I remember they had something like a small mattress and they folded it and put it wherever just for a sleep. It could be inside the factory, or on the pavement, wherever, so that they could wake up and start work again (JF, f, 66).

Another interviewee, from Dundee, had to say:

A lot of the stories about the Indian people who were working in the mills are being neglected. If you asked a lot of the people that used to work here, and you have to catch them because this is an ageing population, a lot of them would remember Indians working at the highest levels. For example, Mr M. was a financial director. This is not part of Dundee's history that it is put across. That would go against the grain, because what you have here is a paternalistic view. That's a heritage thing, I guess... (T, m, 47).

I will return to the analysis of Juteopolis and the kind of history it constructs in chapter seven.

Once visitors have watched the video, they usually come out of the theatre to be welcomed by former jute workers/museum volunteers, dressed in their traditional working uniforms. They give them the background of the history of jute and share their personal experiences of working in mills like Verdant. Later on, other volunteers show them through the machinery by actually operating the machines. This gives an original feel to the space, which instantly turns from a museum into more of what it used to be: a noisy, busy factory. The smell of the jute, together with the strong accents of some of the volunteers, the large posters/ photos of mill workers from

the beginning of the century and the working machines create a unique atmosphere in the museum.



31. Museum Volunteer

32. Machinery at Verdant Works

Visitors wander around the old mill, with the constant guidance of the museum volunteers. There are no museum attendants around; the volunteers are there to share their knowledge and experience of the jute history with the visitors and operate the machines. Volunteers are always eager to start discussions with the visitors, answer questions and, in turn, hear visitors' stories of the old Dundee. When the visit on the ground floor of the museum is over, people continue the visit upstairs, at the social history gallery. This is the area where a lot of the history of Dundee during the 19th and 20th century is given, a history so closely interwoven with the jute industry. Facts about everyday life, political struggles, education and leisure, inform the visitor about the social and historical phenomena that Dundee saw due to the rise and demise of the jute in the city.



33. Touch screen interactive exhibits at Verdant Works

Whereas Discovery Point is dominated by a general atmosphere towards the heroic and the sublime, the adventurous and courageous of the selected few, accentuated by the Hollywood-like presentation and the monumental ship/ symbol of Dundee, Verdant Works appeal to the visitors' romantic selves; original machinery, noises from the by-gones, men and women in uniforms telling stories about 'Bonnie Dundee'. Even though there are displays commenting on the hard and hostile working conditions at the jute mills, the poverty and exploitation, the idealistic gloss-over of a successful past communicates an ever-positive feeling to the visitor.

Essentially, both Verdant Works and Discovery Point are rooted in the rise of the heritage industry in Britain, a trend which started around the 1980s and arguably is still in full flow (Hewison, 1987). Always presenting the past as pleasant and picturesque,

Nostalgic memory should not be confused with true recall. For the individual, nostalgia filters out unpleasant aspects of the past, and of our former selves, creating a self-esteem that helps us to rise above the anxieties of the present. Collectively, nostalgia supplies the deep links that identify a particular generation; nationally it is the source of binding social myths...The impulse to preserve the past is part of the impulse to preserve the self...The question then is not whether or not we should preserve the past, but *what kind of past we have chosen to preserve, and what that has done to our present* (Hewison, 1987; 45-7, my emphasis).

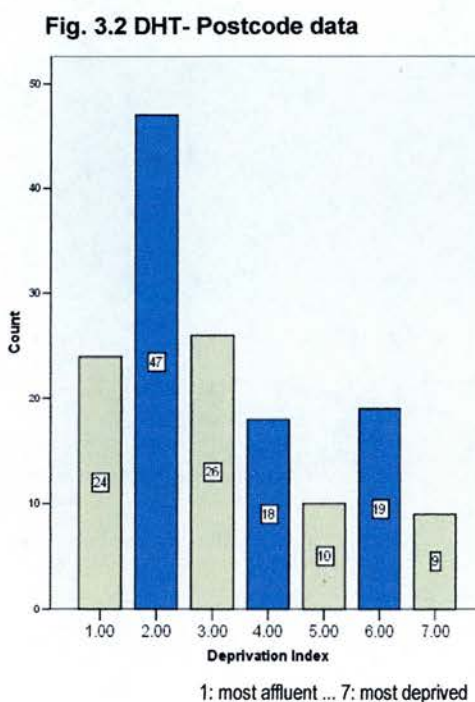
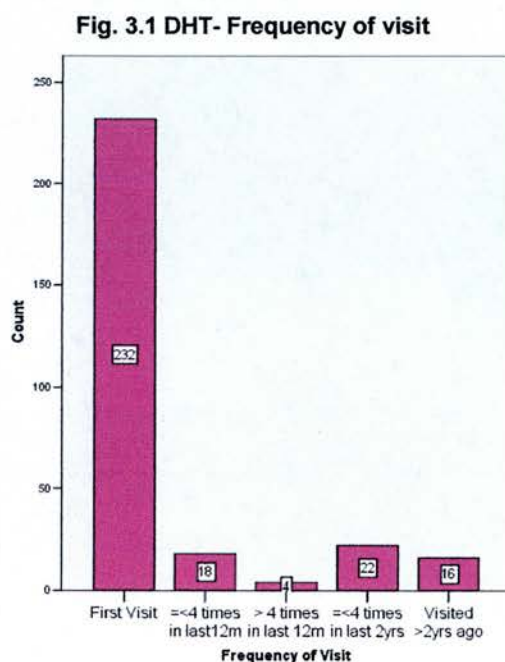


34. In Verdant Works social history gallery

d. Quantitative data, or Dundee Heritage Trust in numbers

Dundee Heritage Trust differs substantially from the other two sites in relation to the frequency its visitors go back to both museums (Fig. 3.1); the vast majority of them (232) were visiting for the first time. Undoubtedly, the reason for this significant differentiation is that both Discovery Point and Verdant Works charge an admission fee, whereas the other two sites are entered for free.

Most of the visitors of the two museums live in relatively affluent areas, although there are also people who come to the museums from the more disadvantaged areas of the city and the surrounding locality (Fig. 3.2).



Again, as with the other two cases, the gender distribution (Fig. 3.3, next page) is balanced, with a slightly higher number of women visitors, whereas in terms of age (Fig. 3.4, next page), most visitors seem to be between 46 and 65 years old.

Fig. 3.3 DHT- Gender

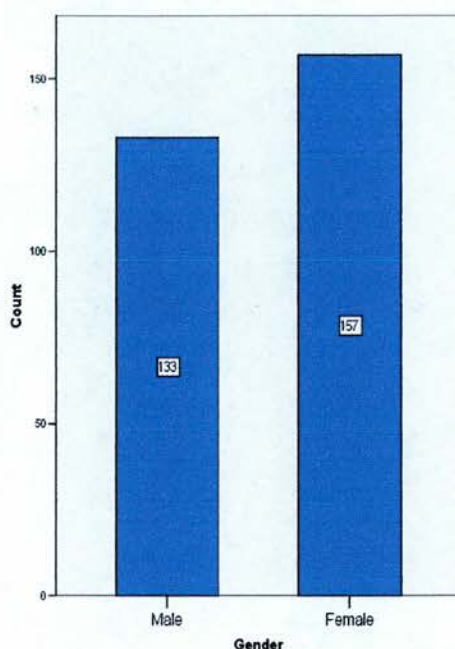


Fig. 3.4 DHT- Age

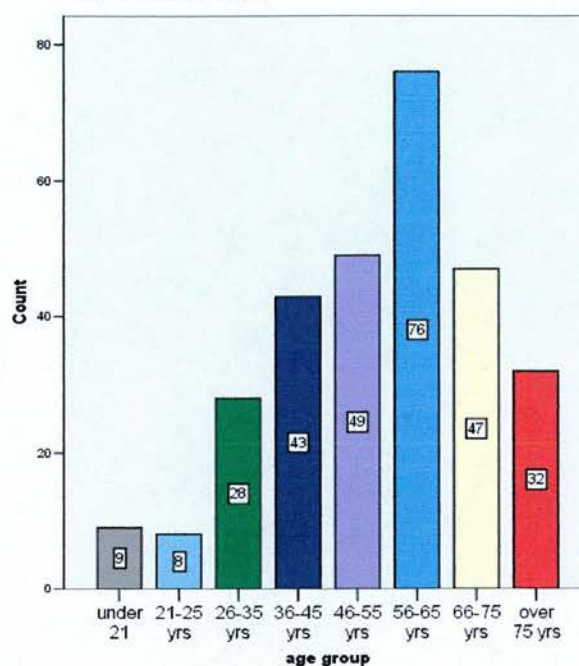
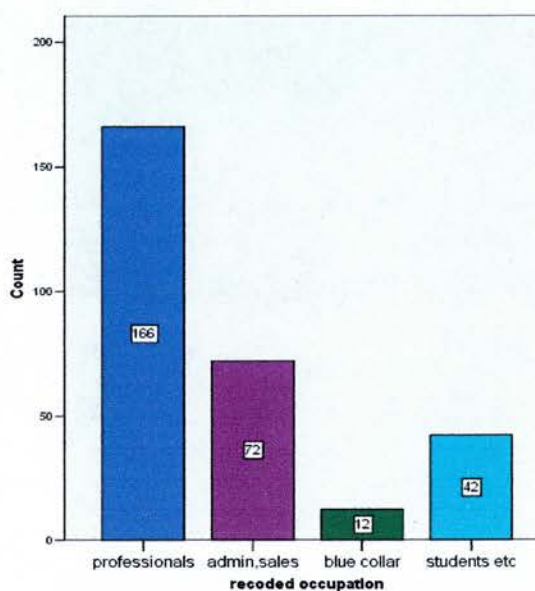


Fig. 3.5 DHT- Occupation



Regarding occupation (Fig. 3.5), similar results emerged as with the McManus Galleries and DCA: namely, professionals and senior officials hold the largest proportion of the Dundee Heritage Trust visitors, more than the half (166); people having positions in administration or sales were the next most popular group (72), some students (42) and few blue collar workers (12). Nevertheless, the picture changes considerably when it comes to levels of education (Fig. 3.6, Fig. 3.7, next page).

Like McManus and unlike DCA, the numbers of those visitors who left education at the age of 16 is quite high (113); however, they are again outnumbered by those visitors with a higher or further education degree (164).

Fig. 3.6 Leaving education age: age groups

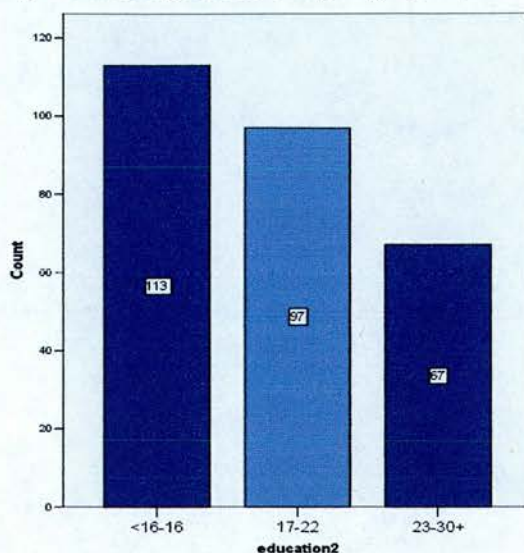
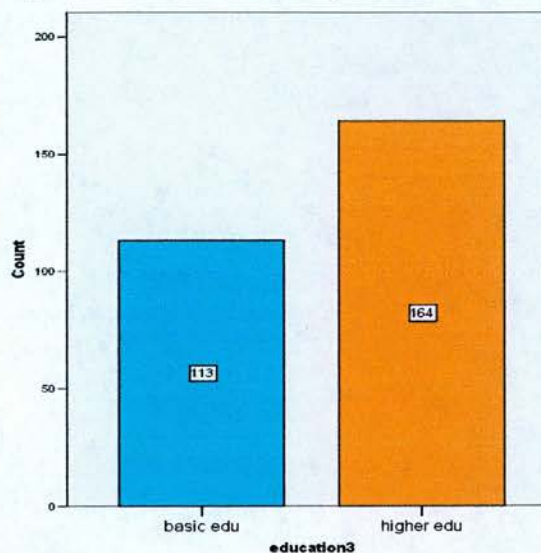
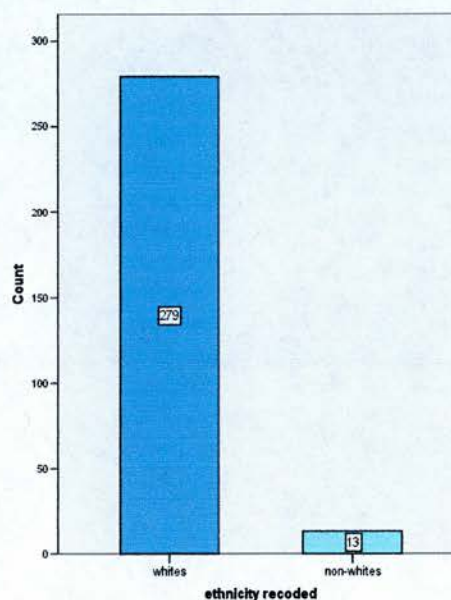


Fig. 3.7 Leaving education age: educational levels



Finally, in terms of ethnicity (Fig. 3.8), Dundee Heritage Trust is similar to the McManus Galleries; there are a few more non-British whites, mostly tourists, visiting, however the numbers of non-whites visitors in general are very low.

Fig. 3.8 DHT- Ethnicity



e. The educational provision of the Dundee Heritage Trust



35. Verdant Works

36. Discovery Point

The Dundee Heritage Trust's Education and Community Outreach Policy, supplied by the education officer, has the following aims:

- Expand knowledge and awareness of heritage and its importance; and,
- Endeavour to create the widest possible access to heritage.

The policy aims to offer educational opportunities to schools and community groups, and interpretation to all visitors through the use of photographs, archives, film footage, artefacts, computers and, of course, the sites themselves. According to its specific objectives:

Education visitors to Discovery Point will develop their knowledge and understanding of:

- the importance of RRS Discovery as the first purpose built scientific research ship, and the Antarctic expeditions she served.
- the continent of Antarctica as a unique continent of extremes.
- historical and contemporary differences in the explorative and scientific work carried out in Antarctica.
- the significance of RRS Discovery as a reminder of Dundee's shipbuilding and whaling significance.

Education visitors to Verdant Works will develop their knowledge and understanding of:

- the growth and development of Dundee's textile industry.
- the importance of the jute industry in local history and its impact on the city and its people.
- the social, political, economic and cultural history of Dundee from Victorian times to the present day.

This is almost a set curriculum that 'education' visitors are presented with in both museums. The education policy, apart from the organised provision, sets out to give visitors relevant interpretation of the displays, namely a narrative of the history of the respective themes in both museums. Hence, learning about the 'significance of Discovery' and the 'importance of the jute industry' are the primary aims of the educational work at Dundee Heritage Trust not only for 'education' visitors but for all, tourists and locals alike.

The interview with the education officer at the Dundee Heritage Trust covered both Discovery Point and Verdant Works. It was suggested that an interview is conducted with the marketing officer, too; the education officer felt that this would be the only way to have a more holistic picture about the educational provision, since the education and marketing departments are working closely together.

The interview started with a discussion about the education officer's background and any changes in the educational provision in the Dundee Heritage Trust over the course of the last few years:

There has been a tendency to move to a more structured programme of events. Before they would do something for the Science Week and for Christmas but now there is a more rolling programme of events. And before it was just schools-based. Now we do community-based learning, we do weekend workshops, we have family events, weekend activities...For museums' and galleries' month, the theme was India... We had performances of Indian dancers and arts and crafts –all sorts of different things, and we had different groups from the local community coming to help. It attracted a lot of visitors that would not normally come to the museum...

However, what was the drive behind these changes in the educational provision at the Trust?

I think it was the way I learned to do things in other places I worked...In the past the educational work in the museum was done by teachers, so it was very much teacher based; but because I don't have a teacher background you can get much wider ideas of what education really is ...Yes, it was me and the funding came after that, I planned the activities, did the budgeting and then went to the funders, did funding proposals.

As with McManus, it took an inspired and experienced individual to promote the educational role of the museum for all its visitors, rather than merely schools. Even though the community

programme is rather limited and school sessions are the primary focus of the Trust's education programming, there is the acknowledgement for the need for —and a degree of realisation, as well— an educational offer for adults. In terms of children's learning in both museums, the Junior Board, a small committee comprised of children members who decide on several aspects of the museum's children services, has been established. Regarding adults, it is museum staff being in charge of the exhibitions and their interpretation. Nonetheless, the volunteer staff —at Verdant Works in particular— through the numerous discussions with the visitors, very often take the exhibition interpretation forward: the presentation of museum artefacts and displays are not an end in themselves but the springboard for a diversity of readings of the history of jute in Dundee.

Another area of discussion focused on the educational policy in Dundee Heritage Trust: is there one, what are its main aims and how are they realised?

Main aims are about preserving and teaching the heritage of Dundee to as wide an audience as possible. I suppose to make the information available to a wide audience, to stress the importance of heritage to the people of Dundee, and wider than Dundee.

As previously mentioned, Dundee Heritage Trust is an independent organisation. Therefore, the question of funding and its implications was another area of discussion:

Well, our programme of events is funded by a variety of different funds, which we apply for. For example, the Robertson's Trust mainly pays my salary and some is paid from the core funding as well. But the programme of events is all funded by different trusts; we don't have any core budget as such for a programme of events, so it is source-funded... There are some (funders) that are interested only in schools, but others are more into community projects or over 16 year olds... it depends on the organisation. I think the trend over the last year was to go more for community groups.

On the other hand, in the interview with the marketing officer, the answer regarding funding for the Dundee Heritage Trust was more pragmatic:

Weddings, dinners, corporate entertainment, we do anything at all, anything to make money... Curators see Discovery as a museum, I see it as business. Their priority is different than mine...S. is leaving soon and they are going to restructure her job. The new person appointed is going to be more focused on trust funding applications. You know, it is always like that...There is the education side, there is the marketing side, and there is the need for good co-operation between both.

Returning to the interview with the education officer, the types of educational activities for adults were discussed, as well as the museums' outreach provision:

I do a rough plan for the whole year but it is subject to change. It is always funding-dependent. I work around national events; we would fit something for science week, the museum and galleries month, or other general kind of things...We have adults workshops in summer but I can't say that they are terribly busy...I think we should plan more things....We do have resource boxes and we travel to places, but it tends to be mainly for schools to be honest. But we do get community group requests. Quite often our guides would go out, they would go to elderly groups, elderly social groups...They do talks, to Rotary clubs, to women guilds, to these sort of groups. We also get the elderly reminiscence groups. And a lot of our guides are retired so it's nice for them to go out, because there is not a huge age gap.

The discussion then moved to the issue of a visitor profile: does Dundee Heritage Trust have an overview of who the visitors that come to both sites are, and are there any specific constituencies that they are targeting?

There are definitely differences in visitors between both sites. You find that the Discovery Point is much more national: people know Discovery, people in America know Discovery, people down in London know Discovery, so you get people coming because of that...Verdant Works has a much higher number of local visitors, cause it is more connected with the local history and the lives of the people here; mothers, fathers who used to work in the industry....We get more elderly people here because of the jute connections, and also the social background, I would say more from the deprived areas, because of the social connections with the jute industry, but I don't know, that's the kind of work that we would like to have more facts and figures on...One thing is for sure; we get tons of coaches with pensioners!

On the other hand, according to the marketing officer,

Main aim is to increase visitor numbers, independent visitors, coach tour groups. We also have an education programme that brings massive profit. We target children schools and older visitors...We work together with S. in advertising in the local market, like school publications. It is important we do this because this is where we get our funding from.

Finally, the last part of our discussion focused on the ways the interviewee perceives education in the museum, the differences between education and learning and what she would see as the way forward:

Education comes first in everything that we do. I do focus on special groups, like school groups or community groups but education is part of everything that we do: designing the exhibitions; curating; designing the interactives; things for different levels of learning;

different levels of interpretation for different ages and groups. ...I think education is about learning, isn't it? People are scared of the word education; they connect it to something formal, whereas learning can be a term for everything.

f. Dundee Heritage Trust: concluding remarks

Dundee Heritage Trust is an independent organisation, which, in museum terms, suggests its dependency on visitors' admission charges and private funding sources for its operation. This is a crucial element to be taken into account for the examination of the educational provision of the Trust. In fact, most of the criticisms against Verdant Works focused on the admission fee; non-visitors research participants argued that they would never pay 'for what we have already paid a lot' (VA, f, 57, n/v). On the other hand, Discovery Point, playing the role of a tourist attraction, is not seen under the same light. In terms of the fieldwork and some general observations and issues to be discussed, Dundee Heritage Trust educational offer presents the following picture:

- As the Trust's name suggests, both museums are **heritage sites**. This implies that the educational role of the Trust is developed around very specific themes; in contrast to McManus Galleries and DCA, which present a variety of exhibitions, Discovery and Verdant Works use a multiplicity of interpretation techniques, like videos, interactive exhibits, touch screens and museum mannequins, as an inherent part of the exhibition displays.
- **In terms of income, education and social networks, Dundee Heritage Trust's visitor demographics** can be located somewhere in the middle of the McManus-DCA spectrum: interestingly, even though the majority of its visitors belong to the higher income and occupational strata, their levels of education are relatively low.
- The **focus** of both museums' interpretation is on **children's learning** in the exhibition space. Despite the videos and the few lengthy text panels, Discovery Point is tailored towards younger generations of visitors. This becomes obvious from the family-focus educational provision, the purpose-built 'Polarama' interactive suite, the Junior Board and the majority of the educational programmes offered to schools; organised educational activities for adults

are few and limited to one-off sessions with elderly reminiscence or other local community groups.

- **Marketing and education** in both museums work very closely together. The relationship between the two departments in the Trust is clear: educational activities need to be marketed to schools and family groups. Therefore, one aspect of the marketing work in both museums, apart from the corporate events, weddings and conferences, is to promote educational activities in schools and communities. Education is a source of income for the museum, even though concessions are arranged for those groups that might not have the means to pay for their visit. Thus, the educational programming and interpretation both serve the public mission of the Trust and generate income for the economic survival of both sites.
- The **hidden curriculum** of the exhibition narratives. Both sites present romanticised and heroic versions of Dundee's past. As it is often the case with heritage sites, the grand-narratives of the few (men) and the brave, the infamous and the sublime, present Dundee's whaling and jute industry as sources of the utmost economic and social wealth, fame and glorious history. At the same time, the narrative constructs the basis for the new profile of the city, one that belongs to the post-industrial era of a service economy; the presence of the Trust in the city is an example of this new economic reality.
- The **'reading' of the museum displays** offers few opportunities to think from an anti-colonial, anti-dominant perspective; on the contrary, walking through the galleries of Verdant Works and discussing on various aspects of Dundee's history with local jute workers/ museum volunteers gives the unique experience of a shared construction of history. Indeed, volunteers in Verdant Works rarely dominate the discussion; most of the times, they take pride in having met and shared ideas with people from all over the world. They embody the notion of the informal educator and give life and soul to the museums.

4. Conclusions

Like many other UK and European urban areas, Dundee, a traditionally working-class city, has—for some time now—experienced the challenges of the post-industrial era. The work of the four museums and galleries discussed above are examples of the ways culture—in all its shapes and forms—is increasingly being seen as a vital aspect of the new Scottish service and tourist economy. New art galleries and the refurbished local museum are parts of larger regeneration plans; other museums are attracting the much-needed tourist share for the city. Although fairly late compared with elsewhere, Dundee is going through a phase of transition, attempting to re-establish its identity and modernise its image. Museums and galleries have traditionally had a significant role to play in constructing historical narratives, justifying the past and projecting the future—Dundee's case is no different. Therefore, an analysis of the educational offer of the museums and galleries is not merely interesting in terms of the contribution of the museum sector to the educational and leisurely pursuits of the city's inhabitants or tourists; it is also an exploration of the stories a city says about itself, its people past and present and its way forward. In this sense, researching the 'field' of adult education in museums in Dundee has been an enlightening endeavour to locate the forces constituting it and follow their flows and diverse—sometimes parallel, often conflicting—directions.

Nonetheless, what has the fieldwork investigation shown about the Dundee museum field? How does the 'soft' data derived from the observations in the museums and the interviews with the education officers compare or contrast with the hard data of numbers? One of the most striking findings of this exercise was the complementary nature of the provision in the four sites. Looking across them, one finds a startling complementarity of visiting habits in the city; namely, McManus used to be the more traditional type of museum visited by primarily local constituencies, whereas DCA, by presenting progressive art, serves the younger population. Finally, Dundee Heritage Trust contributes to local tourism through the two visitor attractions. Hence, the Dundee museums enjoy the potential of working alongside without competing for visitors, in contrast to most museums and art galleries in other urban centres. DCA's visitor numbers are, of course, far higher than any other site, exposing the Centre to national and international comparisons. However, it is precisely its international success which might be threatening it with losing its local touch. Even though DCA's educational provision has become

exemplary in following the now widely accepted and recommended pattern of extensive planning, delivering and evaluating learning with children and young people, there are questions regarding the appeal of the exhibitions to the broader Dundee public. Both the quantitative and, as will be discussed in the next chapter as well, the qualitative data in this study have shown this rather emphatically.

Examining all four case studies comparatively, McManus Galleries presents a balanced distribution in terms of its visitors' backgrounds. The old local authority museum, now closed for a two year refurbishment, opened its doors to people from all backgrounds. The statistical data reveals that a diversity of —mainly white— constituencies were enjoying the exhibitions at the museum. DCA and the Dundee Heritage Trust present a different picture; DCA is being visited by a largely young, educated and prosperous population, whereas Dundee Heritage Trust mainly by the middle-aged or older age groups of a generally high social status.

The following bar charts might help construct the picture of Dundee's museum visiting public. The first bar chart represents real numbers out of the totality of the survey participants (around 300 at each site) in stacked bars. The second bar chart, showing clustered bars, gives the percentages of each different variable, as they are distributed across the three organisations. The gender distribution (see next page, Fig. 4.1.1, Fig. 4.1.2) in all museums is fairly balanced; regarding visitors' age groups (see next page, Fig. 4.2.1, Fig. 4.2.2), the bar charts confirm what has already been discussed. Both findings are statistically significant (age: $\chi^2=.000$, gender: $\chi^2=.069$, see appendix V) and can therefore be generalised about visiting trends in Dundee:

Fig. 4.1 Gender distribution (population)

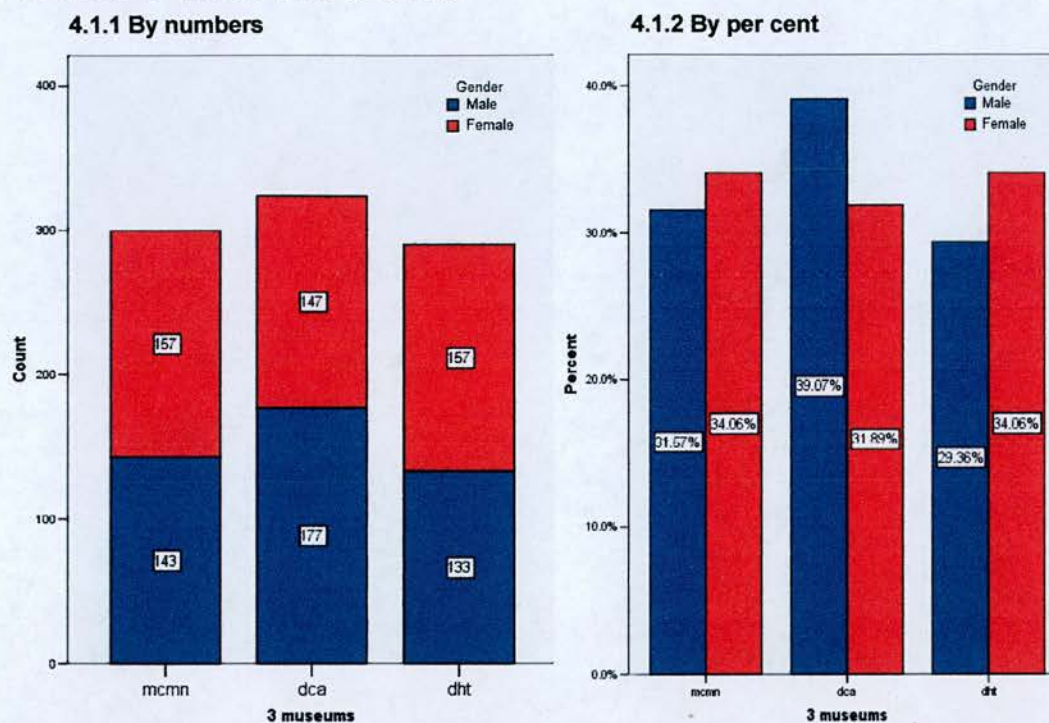
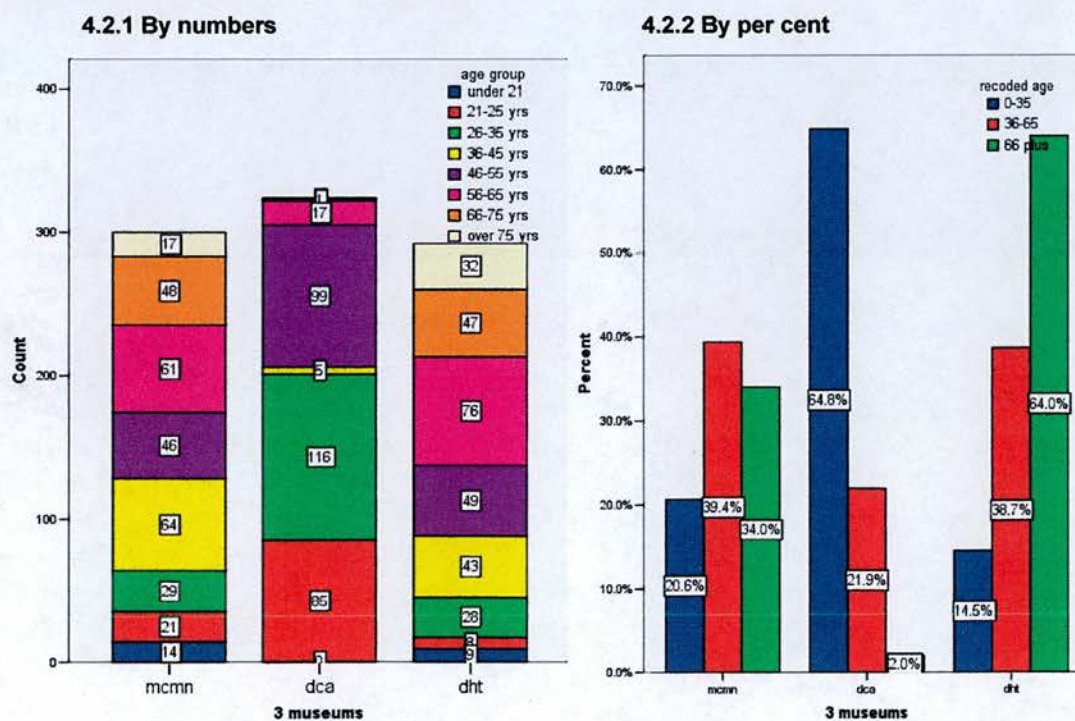
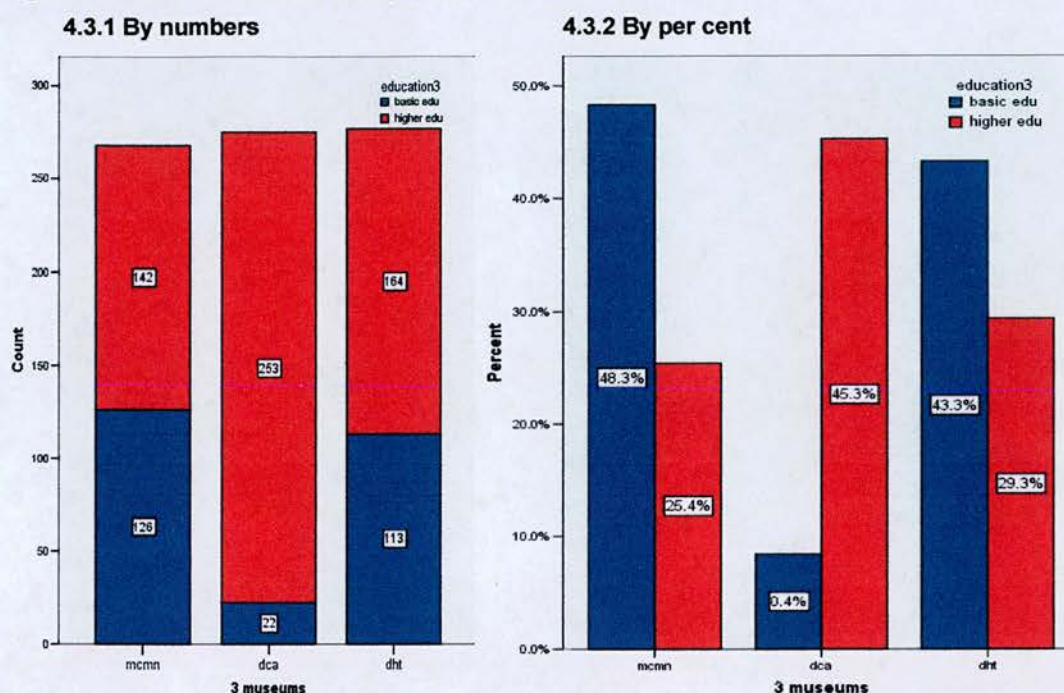


Fig. 4.2 Visitors' age groups (population)



In terms of educational background (Fig. 4.3.1, Fig. 4.3.2) McManus Galleries and Dundee Heritage Trust share the majority of the visitor population who had basic education, whereas Dundee Contemporary Arts is mainly visited by those that have had a further or higher education background. This is a statistically significant finding and therefore can be generalised about the visiting trends in all three organisations ($\chi^2=.000$, see appendix V). Arguably, this could be attributed to the large numbers of student visitors at the DCA.

Fig. 4.3 Visitors' educational background (population)



Even though the Dundee museum visitors live in both affluent and deprived areas by more or less equal numbers (see next page, Fig. 4.4.1, Fig. 4.4.2) ($\chi^2=.015$, see appendix V), in terms of occupational background (see next page, Fig. 4.5.1, Fig. 4.5.2), it was statistically proven ($\chi^2=.000$, see appendix V) that the vast majority of them are professionals or senior officers. Most students in the city visit DCA, whereas out of the quite low number of 47 blue collar workers who participated in the survey (just 5% of the total survey population), most of them were visiting the McManus.

Fig. 4.4 Visitors' area of living

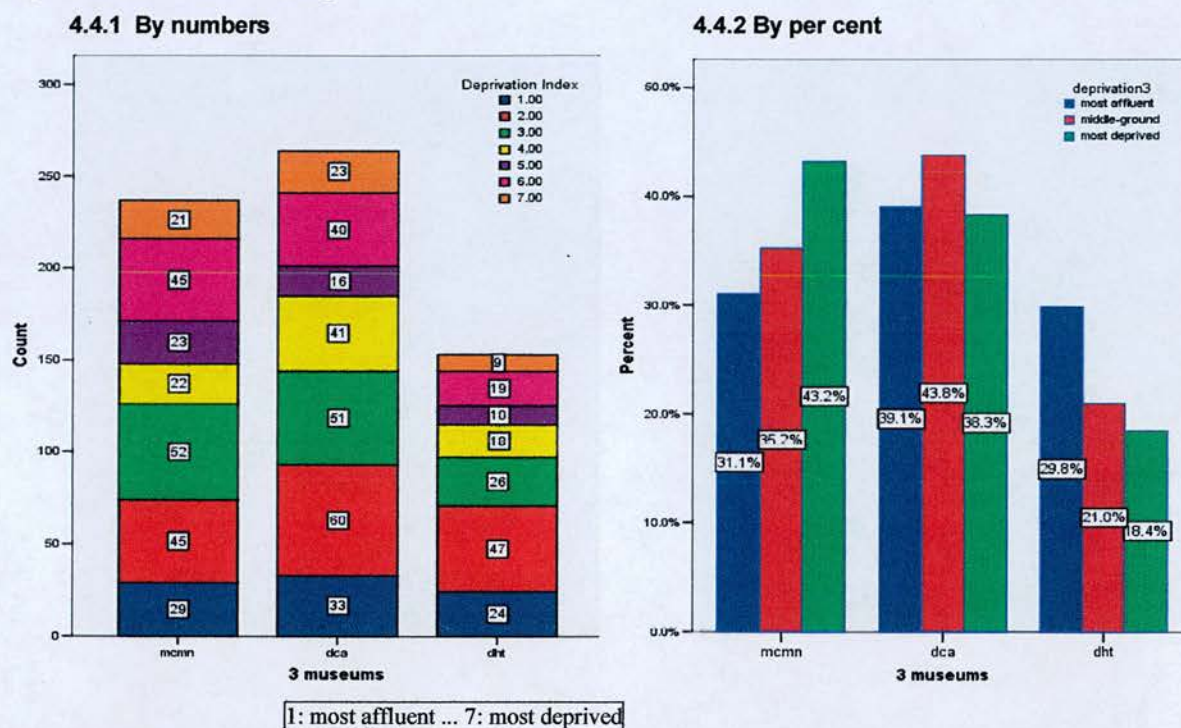
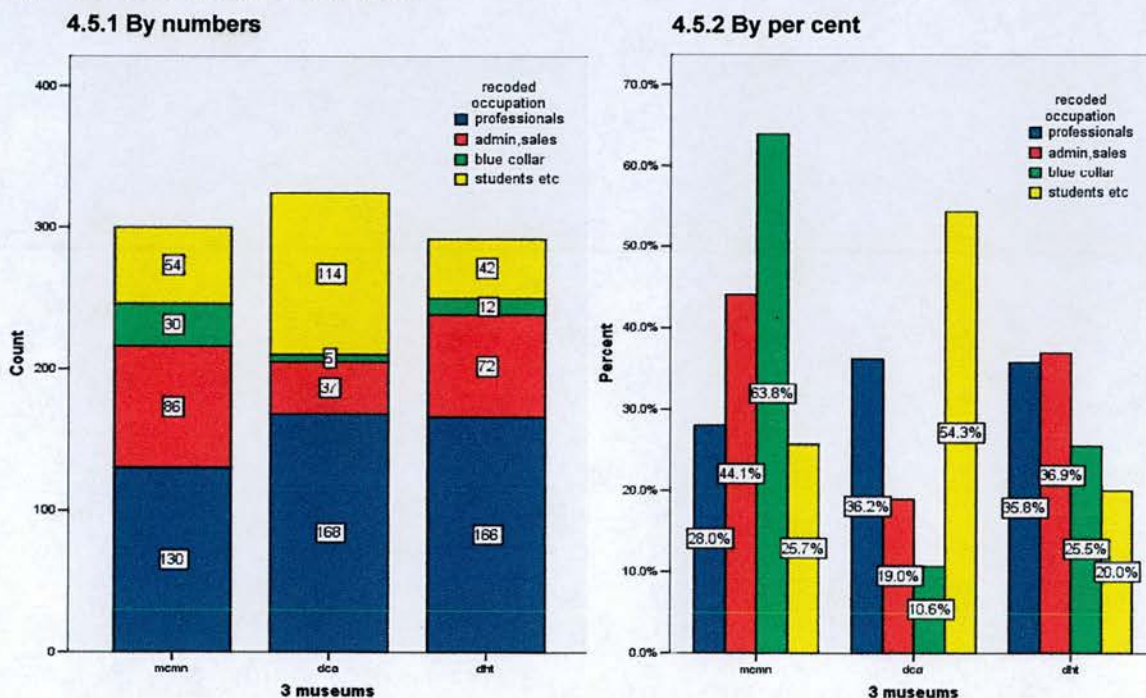
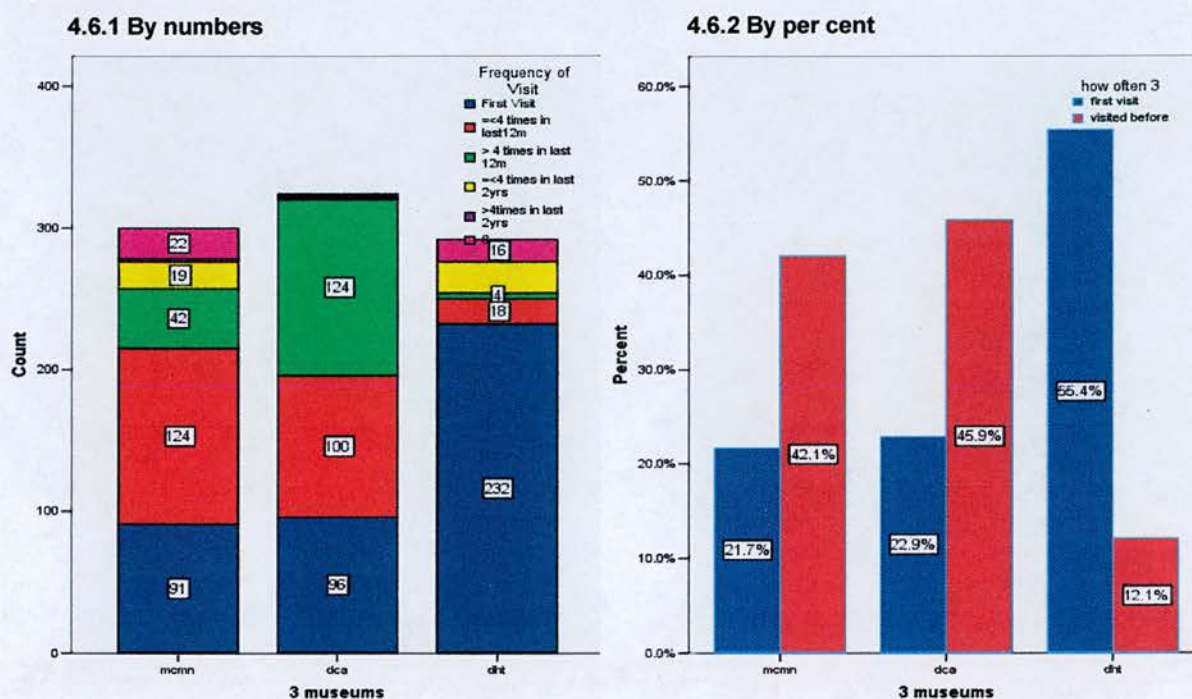


Fig. 4.5 Visitors' occupational groups



In terms of frequency of visit (Fig. 4.6.1, Fig. 4.6.2), the results across cases are statistically significant ($\chi^2=.000$, see appendix V) and reflect the findings of the separate case studies; McManus Galleries and DCA have a large number of repeat visits, whereas Dundee Heritage Trust is primarily visited once, a finding that accords with the character of both sites as visitor attractions that have permanent exhibitions and charge for entrance. Finally, the results on ethnicity were not comparable across sites, since the ethnicity question was not included in the DCA questionnaire.

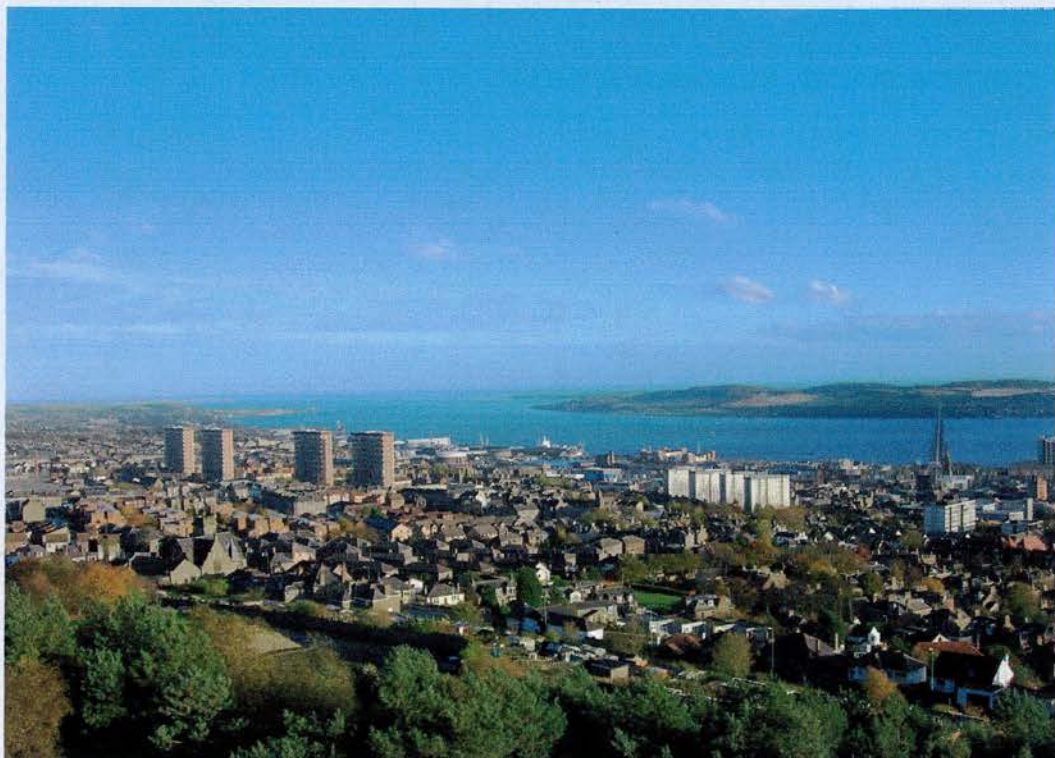
Fig. 4.6 Visitors' frequency



The quantitative data from the survey conducted in all four museums and galleries confirm Bourdieu's (1984) theory of distinction in the museum. With the exception of the McManus Galleries which, despite their lower visitor numbers, were being visited by a more representative public in Dundee, the notion that museums and galleries are 'not for the likes of' certain people is still dominant. DCA, a highly successful venue of international acclaim, is linking Dundee with a progressive and fresh perspective that attracts investment for the city, however, like other art galleries similar to it (see Baniotopoulou, 2001 for similar findings about Guggenheim Bilbao) does not attract a representative sample of the local population. Finally, the specific nature and organisational structure of Dundee Heritage Trust is reflected at its visitor demographics; arguably, the more popular

nature of the display topics in both Discovery Point and Verdant Works explain what seems as a wider representation of the local population in their visitors' patterns.

The old McManus is now closed. The structural integrity of the building, along with its dated interior, were in urgent need of restoration. Whether the refurbished museum will create more meaningful educational opportunities for its visitors, is for future research to determine. For the time being, I will reserve myself to the analysis of what the Dundee citizens thought of the educational role of the old McManus, as well as the DCA and Dundee Heritage Trust. The next chapter focuses on this dialogue with the people of Dundee, and attempts to answer some of the questions raised by the study.



37. Dundee (panoramic view from the Law)

Dundee museum and galleries educational provision and the views of the public: Fieldwork presentation and analysis

This section presents qualitative data collected in 40 accompanied visits, conducted with 79 participants between May and September 2005 in all four sites under investigation.

A. Qualitative data collection: access and organisation issues

1. The 'accompanied visit': considerations and practicalities

As detailed in chapter four, the interviewees were mainly members of community groups across the city. Nevertheless, the design of the research had originally been fairly different.

Research participants were initially conceptualised as belonging to two broad categories: 'visitors' and 'non-visitors'. 'Visitors' were considered these people visiting at least once a year, and 'non-visitors' those who had never visited a museum, or visited only once. Based on previous museum research and literature (Economou, 2004; Merriman, 1991; Kirchberg 1996), this schema was considered as an already tested research device, useful in comparing and contrasting public perceptions of museums. However, field research was soon to question the presumptions accompanying the logic behind this categorisation.

a. 'Visitors'

A pilot interview scheme started in early April 2005, in order to test the 'accompanied visit' method and other practicalities. During this initial phase, an attempt was made to approach individual 'visitors' (regular museum goers) onsite and interview them, following the model that had already been used in previous museum research (Hooper-Greenhill and Moussouri, 2001b; 2001c). However, this proved an unworkable endeavour. Were participants to be approached as they entered the museum/ gallery, it would have required a team of researchers to coordinate and conduct the interviews in all four sites and at the same timeframe. Unfortunately, the resource limitations of doctoral research resulted in a re-adjustment of the approach.

Nonetheless, the core structure of the accompanied visit method was followed. Interviews were conducted with participants in the exhibition space, in order to critically discuss the displays and investigate their views on both the organised and non-organised educational provision of the museum/ gallery. However, instead of approaching 'visitors' when they entered the museum, the initial contact and negotiation for the interview was conducted in community centres; I will come back to this in due course.

b. 'Non-visitors'

The rationale behind interviewing 'non-visitors' was to investigate the reasons for their non-participation in museums. My intention was to examine how structural factors might affect their decision not to visit museums or galleries; how class position could influence what kind of learning they experience in the museum; and finally, what their ideas are for opening up museum educational work to broader social groups.

Purposeful sampling was used in the selection of community centres in Dundee, in order to approach potential research participants from a diversity of social backgrounds. Community centres, community organisations and other similar groups are a major source of non-visitors, not only in Dundee but elsewhere in the UK. The reasons for this are multiple; when—and as shown in the previous chapter, fairly rarely—education in museums stretches further than providing for compulsory education (mainly schools), community centres are sites of the congregation of an adult population that sometimes finds in them what museums often fail to offer: social interaction, support, informal learning, community rapport. As a consequence, museums, when in collaboration with such centres, can extend their constituencies to usually more disadvantaged areas and social groups difficult to approach, like post-school young adults, the unemployed or elderly groups. Again, as seen in the previous chapter, museum and gallery education for the over 16 year olds is a major stated priority for both McManus Galleries and DCA; most of the young people participating are traced through youth organisations or community groups. Finally, partnerships across organisations at a local level, for example amongst community organisations, museums and galleries, educational authorities and other institutions, are very often a key requirement of many funding providers. Since museums reach out to community centres and organisations when in search of 'non-visitors', it was considered worthwhile to attempt to find my own 'non-visiting' research participants by following a similar route. Ultimately, such an endeavour would test out the 'non-visitor' views on and expectations from museums, and

then cross-examine them with the educational programming of the museums under investigation. Further, it would attempt to reveal the reasons for which ‘non-visitors’ might decide to be part of other learning activities, but not consider taking up learning in the museum as one of them.

Nonetheless, the discourses developed around community outreach museum programmes largely focus on the multiple forms of disadvantage their members face, which often exclude them from participation in social groupings or activities that are mainstream. The term ‘community outreach’ is either invariably and vaguely used to describe work in rural areas, or, in an urban context, denotes educational programming for people facing the risk of ‘exclusion’. Increasing confidence and skills is the overarching aim of most of this kind of educational work in museums. Indeed, after the interviews with the education officers and in accordance with the review of the relevant literature, I firmly believed that visiting community centres in Dundee —especially in the north, more disadvantaged areas of the city, like Douglas and Lochee— I would encounter people whose least concern would be to take part in ‘lifelong learning’, people whose life circumstances would lead them to ‘support’ programmes provided by the centres³⁸.

c. Planning the visits

Community workers were immensely helpful in bringing me in contact with members of the numerous groups based at the community centers. After an initial letter explaining the aims of the research³⁹, they would then be contacted by telephone to arrange a meeting. There, I would give more details about the research and ask for their assistance in coming into contact with the potential interviewees. The usual process was the following:

1. Community workers would normally propose some adult learning groups they thought might be interested in the research;
2. With the workers’ assistance, I would then try to have a profile of their members, (age groups, gender, social and occupational background) and if they had recently visited museums or heritage sites as part of group sessions;
3. Following this and after agreeing on approaching specific groups, they would contact them, either they themselves or through other workers/ group leaders, in

³⁸ For a complete list of the community centres/ organisations and workers that participated in the research, see the Appendix III.

³⁹ See Appendix II.

order to explore the members' positive or negative reactions towards participating in the research;

4. A week later, during the following group session, they would ask for the formal agreement of the group for me to visit them and talk very briefly about the research;
5. I would then arrange and visit the group, explain the research and organize visits with those willing to be 'accompanied' in the museum and discuss on the educational dimension of their visit.

The groups I came in contact with were arts and crafts, literacy, drama, poetry, oral and social history groups or groups of more general interest. The enthusiasm with which most of the participants welcomed the research was unanticipated; instead of disadvantaged groups in need of inclusion and participation, most of the people I met were people with a lively interest in meeting others and trying out new learning experiences. Adult education seemed to be flourishing in most of these community centres in Dundee, which attract both the young and the old. All kinds of projects seemed to be under way, with some groups preparing activities for the 'Adult Learners' Week' (May 2005), others arranging visits to places outside Dundee, or simply gathering on specific nights every week to dance, make cards, have cookery lessons and pursue other activities. Some of those people were visiting museums and galleries in the city frequently and others were not; nonetheless, most of them showed willingness to take part. Thus, taking the obstacles already discussed with finding interviewees in the museum space itself into account, I decided to select all my interviewees, both visitors and non-visitors, from participants in community projects.

The reasons for doing this were both methodological as well as pragmatic. First, it meant that more consistency was achieved amongst the interviewees' background and interests. In addition, people who were not museum enthusiasts were more willing to visit with other friends of theirs from the group, when the latter were more confident with visiting a museum. It brought community groups in contact with museums and galleries in Dundee that they had not visited before and hence offered them a new perspective on the exhibitions and their educational provision. Finally, it allowed me to include in the research most of the people that wanted to share their views on museum learning, irrespective of how often they visit or not.

2. 'Visitors' and 'non-visitors': a question of degree

Coming in contact with a range of people and attempting to identify them under the two categories of 'visitor' and 'non-visitor', put the usefulness of this binary schema into question; people's visiting habits could not be easily grouped in the one or the other category. Participants could not say with certainty how often they visited museums or not; some would visit regularly if an exhibition was of particular interest to them, or others liked visiting when on holidays abroad.

Even though some of them were not museum enthusiasts and would hardly ever enter their doors, the utilization of this dichotomy did not appear to handle more subtle differentiations amongst interviewees' visiting habits. Crucially, the interviewees' initial response to how often they visit, was more of a reflection of an image they wanted to create about themselves, rather than the frequency of their actual visits:

Do you visit any museums and galleries in Dundee?

-No, no, Ah' m not that type of person (Z, f, 57).

-Ah' m not either, but when I go I enjoy it (Y, f, 61).

-It's not that Ah don't like them but they are sort of at your home doorstep, aren't they? Ah mean if you go to another toon, then maybe you would go and visit because it is not your own toon (Z, f, 57).

-So do you go to museums when you are on holidays?

-No, no really (laughs) (Z, f, 57).

When presented with the choice between being a 'visitor' or a 'non-visitor', interviewees would define themselves according to their embodied beliefs and social status. Hence, very often, interviewees that claimed to 'love' museums, would come to admit that they do not visit as often as they thought. On the other hand, 'non-visitors', even though initially claiming never to have been in a museum, when prompted, they would remember several times that they had visited or even participated in educational programmes.

a. The 'non-visitor' type: some background

Literature on the term 'non-visitor' shows that its construction was the brain-child of museum marketing. The fusion of education and marketing in museums has often led to educational provision being 'targeted' according to market-defined visitors' and non-visitors' 'needs' and preferences. In the North American context, Storksdieck supports:

Visitorship has declined after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. The concurrent decline in world stock markets and the associated shrinkage in corporate donations led to serious monetary shortfalls in many U.S. museums. The questions since have become: How can we attract more visitors? How can we attract repeat visitors? And, most urgently, museums have been asking themselves: How can we attract those who currently opt not to visit museums? (2005, no page number)

As discussed in the introductory chapter, museums in the UK in the 90s found themselves in a situation where 'hard' data regarding their public provision was necessary in order to secure funding. Increased professionalism and the evaluation of museums' impact became the sine qua non of a successful organisation, and museums were asked not only to increase visitor numbers, but, according to stakeholders' requirements, reach out to 'under-served' (according to the American discourse), or 'disadvantaged' (according to the UK official language) communities. Especially in the UK, studies of the non-visitor population (Hood, 1983; Merriman, 1991; Trevelyan, 1991) have often informed museums' marketing strategies; the most recent example of this trend has been the extensive 'audience' research conducted for the Kelvingrove Museum and Art Gallery (Economou, 2004). Nonetheless, it has been argued that the segmentation of the public into different groups or 'users', like ethnic minorities, the third age, children, unemployed or people with disabilities, focuses on creating educational 'silos' in museums:

In these silos, the primary concern about the learner relates to their existence within a particular type of learning, or during a particular life stage, or while pursuing a particular outcome of learning...The 'silo' approach to thinking about learning inevitably creates hierarchies, in which one particular institution, a particular demographic or a particular educational outcome is elevated as being more important than the rest...[it] inevitably, creates cracks and gaps into which the non-engaged or excluded members of our community fall...or, if attention is given to them it is often conceived in terms of the non participant somehow being deficient (Cross, 2003, no page number).

This approach, criticised often for tokenism, was often reflected in 'non-visitors'' views of the museum. In addition, it does not define the 'non-visitor' question under a framework of structural relations of inequality and domination, but, on the contrary, follows the marketing, consumerist logic of needs, products and take-up; indeed, it was this patronising discourse that many of the interviewees argued against.

Returning to the fieldwork, adhering closely to the initial categorizations became even more problematic after having conducted the first set of interviews. Even though the initial hypothesis behind the 'visitor'/ 'non-visitor' framework was that the views posed from the two 'groups' would differentiate and might even contrast, the reality was different. In fact, agreeing and opposing views came from both directions, and often the most striking

differentiations would arise from the same ‘type’ of interviewees. Arguably, and to an extent realistically, one’s consent to participate in research related to museum education, even though they do not visit museums in general, presents the researcher with the problem of the reasons for and degree of their ‘non-visiting’ habit. In other words, what are the differences between non-visitors who consciously and often passionately do not visit museums on the basis of an anti-elitist, anti-institutional educational perspective, in comparison with those people that simply believe museum and gallery visiting is not something they do? The blunt reality this study had to face—but, I would think, research in general often does—is that, even though it set out to research the latter group, ultimately explored the first. In fact, I was often faced with the—almost surrealist—question of the feasibility of investigating non-experience; what are the chances of exploring the reasons people have for not visiting museums when they have never been to one in the first place?

The ‘non-visitor’ question and the ways it has been constructed and applied by current museum research, is not about those who do not visit museums because of inequality of opportunity, education or income; rather, it refers to those who ‘opt not to visit museums’ (see the quotation by Storksdieck above), but choose to spend their leisure time and money elsewhere. Of course, when museum visiting becomes a matter of choice rather than condition, inequality becomes naturalized and embodied. It is a marketing problem, rather than a social one. In the course of an interview, one young non-visitor said:

Nah, cuz Ah’m no the sort of person who comes ti galleries. Yi asked us ti be honest, right? Well, ti be completely honest, I prefer goin oot with mi mates all the time (B, f, 16).

Therefore, I refused to suit the fieldwork for this study to prescribed categories and discourses that informed the initial design of this research. Instead, without losing sight of the study’s questions and aims, I attempted to pursue work in the field, which would lead my thinking and writing as much as I was leading it. Fieldwork is indeed a matter of choice. However, some make their choices blind-folded and others in full swing; I wanted to be at the side of the latter.

3. The ‘accompanied visits’: themes and questions

As the following section will show, interview data was indeed rich and presented alternative and radical views towards more popular educational opportunities by the museums in Dundee. These views did not come solely from ‘non-visitors’; more frequent museum-goers,

despite their love for museums, often gave quite a critical appreciation of their learning experiences.

As previously stated, the interview schedule comprised of a number of thematic areas to be examined. All interviews were topic-led discussions, the topics arising most of the times from the interviewees' perceptions of education in the museum/gallery. As a result, specific groupings of themes were formed. The presentation of the findings, which this chapter focuses on, follows this construct, built on what often emerged as common trains of thought amongst the interviewees. Apart from this, no strict separation, but only an indication of the interviewees' visitation habits, is given. The interviewees were often prompted into elaborating remarks and expanding on views, however, most of the times it seemed that they themselves were keen on explaining and discussing their museum or gallery educational experiences in length. It was only rare that the interviewees were hesitant in sharing their views; these were, almost with no exception, young people, aged 16-18 years old.

The choice of the museum/gallery visit was left to each interviewee. Participants were given the space to choose the ways they elaborated on their views, either by finding examples through looking at the exhibits, or by talking more freely about their experiences in museums and galleries in Dundee and elsewhere. Thus, presenting and examining the qualitative data by site was not considered meaningful at this instance. Rather, this approach allowed more room for the participants to build and elaborate on their opinions and therefore offered an innovative method of widening research and working collaboratively with the research subjects from the very early stages of the study.

Further, the interviewees were free to choose between being interviewed on their own or in groups. Again, it was interesting to note that in the case of regular visitors, most of them wanted to be interviewed alone, in contrast to less frequent visitors who would largely prefer to speak in small groups of two to three people; the first would also state that solitary visits were generally preferable to them, whereas some 'non-visitors' said that they would never go to a museum on their own. According to one of the interviewees, 'I would feel a bit silly, you know, just wandering about on my own'.

Most interviews were tape-recorded⁴⁰, transcribed and analysed using a combination of codes and analytical tools. At the start, the prospect of creating a coherent and focused analysis

⁴⁰ Nine interviewees wished their voices not to be recorded; therefore hand-written notes were kept.

from the mass of interview and field observations' data seemed overwhelming, despite the analytic commentaries written during the fieldwork months. Finding themes and categories in the qualitative data requires intensive reflection and analysis; I attempted to keep almost line-by-line comments on the data both during the time of the fieldwork, as well as later on, upon completion of the data collection process. This allowed for a refinement of issues explored while in the field, since the experience of spending time in the exhibition space and with the research participants was bound to influence the ways fieldwork was conducted. In addition, I was interested in comparing my side notes from the first months of the fieldwork with ideas and insights I had at the very end. Notes at this early stage were taken in a relatively crude form, usually as descriptors of events, interviewees' ideas, incidents and features. For example,

<i>Gal attend reading</i>	Gallery attendant reading a book, some visitors in the gallery space, one of them taking notes. A couple walking around, they see the paintings in passing, they discuss something –the gallery more of a backdrop to their walk. Another visitor on his own –seems eager to speak to me, maybe wonders what I am writing? He comes close: 'I am looking for the painting by Edward Burne-Jones –have they removed it?' 'Not sure, I am not working here –just a student'. 'Duncan and Jordanstone?' 'No, Edinburgh Uni, I am doing a study on the museums in Dundee'. 'Really? What kind of study?' 'On their educational side'. 'That's good, that's good, good luck with it. I am sure you'd wish they were a bit more popular. I only come in this one from time to time. I am a painter myself, amateur of course'.
<i>v. note-taking</i>	
<i>v. strolling –not really looking</i>	
<i>v. looking for specific info/work</i>	
<i>museums unpopular</i> <i>personal interest: painter</i>	

Marginal notes helped identify a variety of loosely related (or even unrelated) issues. Reading through the notes and the interview transcripts as a complete corpus was useful in looking back at the field experience in its totality and as it evolved over time. Going back to the study's research questions was crucial at this point in order to identify what kinds of data were more relevant to the study's objectives and where the emphasis needed to be placed. This helped identifying the most fruitful way to sort the data in order to make it more manageable for their analysis on the basis of the theoretical resources framing the study.

The first sorting of the data was done according to the following core categories:

1. General perceptions about museums and galleries and their visitors
2. Organised educational opportunities:
 - a. Interactive and audiovisual support
 - b. Talks, tours and workshops

- c. Exhibition interpretation and text
- 3. Educational experiences
- 4. Ideas for change –suggestions

The next stage in the analysis was to write theoretical memos which would elaborate on insights and often relate or integrate what were previously separate pieces of data and analytic points. Although theoretical resources assisted in bringing together instances or quotes (for example, the notion of ‘social capital’ would bring together data related to peer pressure, social networks or museum visiting as a social event), the more systematic this categorization became, the more focused the analysis was. Williams’ ‘dominant, residual and emergent’ schema was very useful at this point: I used the theoretical resources to work with data which suggest what I identified as dominant trends, residual tendencies and emergent possibilities –chapter seven follows this construct. Finally, I further elaborated the analysis of the qualitative data by critically reviewing the findings of previous research, comparing, contrasting and drawing on this study’s main conclusions, highlighting the implications of ideas such as the market, individualism, learning and accessibility on the educational role of museums and galleries in the city of Dundee. Gramsci’s notion of hegemony, Williams’s idea of the selective tradition, Bourdieu’s analysis of cultural capital, the notion of field and habitus, as well as the Habermasian depth hermeneutics were particularly useful in signposting the data, finding linkages, elaborating on the theoretical propositions and answering the research questions this study set for itself.

In general, the analysis of the ethnographic data followed a process from moving from a general signposting towards the filtering of the findings on the basis of the theoretical framing of the research. An overview of the different stages followed would look like this:

- 1. Writing observations –transcription of interviews
- 2. Coding during fieldwork
- 3. Coding at the end of the fieldwork - comparisons
- 4. Thematic categorisation: general themes
- 5. Theoretical memoing
- 6. Analytical categorisation of ‘dominant-emergent-residual’ –further theoretical elaboration, focused coding and analysis of the data
- 7. Conclusions

The remainder of this chapter presents interview data from the accompanied visits, following the four categories described above. Quotes are given when they describe experience with more sentiment, flavour and eloquence than could be achieved in the third person. Finally, all examples are anonymised.

B. Qualitative data collection: presentation of the findings

1. Perceptions about museums and galleries and their visitors

The main interview focus was an inquiry on the participants' educational experiences in museums and galleries. However, one of the 'introductory' topics discussed was interviewees' general perceptions about museums and galleries and their visitors. This aimed at opening up the discussion to their ideas about education (or the absence of it) in museums and galleries; it would also give clues about different ways to pursue the main inquiry. The answers varied considerably, however people's perceptions about museums and galleries sometimes seemed to determine their educational experiences in the museum. Some of those given by young people who do not frequent museums were very much in accordance with the following:

Ah think they (museums) are borin, cuz they are no wha young people are inti. It is just about stuff you get taught in school and history an old stuff, it is just the same... Am not really inti museums or that. An girls an boys oor age are no inti any o that. They have other things in mind, like goin oot an stuff, not really galleries.... Ah don't like pictures at all...Ah mean a like some, like pictures with my friends from nights oot but nothin like that (B, f, 16⁴¹).

During the same interview, C. brought in a perspective commonly shared among a lot of the interviewees, namely that museums and galleries are for children. However,

Ah widna bring mi children here cuz they get taught all this stuff at school. Yi want them not to be bored goin roond galleries. Yi want them ti enjoy themselves an Ah don't think they wid enjoy themselves comin ti a gallery (C, f, 17).

Another aspect that seemed to influence young people's perceptions of museums and galleries is pressure from peers:

Do you ever go to museums with your friends?

⁴¹ The abbreviations regarding each interviewee's identity stand as follows: X. (participant's name), f (female) or m (male) and age (eg. 23). This pattern is followed throughout this section.

Oh, yes, the hell we do... They wid go 'ha, ha, ha! Yi went to a museum!'
Would you say that this could sometimes be a reason that you wouldn't go to a museum?
 Ah guess so, cuz they would ask a hundred and one questions, 'why the hell did ya go to a museum?' an stuff...(B, f, 16).

The idea of museums and galleries being tedious seemed to prevail in young people's minds. Similarly, many of the adult interviewees that are not regular museum visitors shared the view about museums being quiet and serious. Similarly to young people and the peer pressure they often feel against pursuing such leisure activities, some of the adult visitors would often argue that museums are not 'for the likes of them'. D., one of the regular McManus visitors, said:

This sense of having to be quiet in art galleries, as if you are there only to look at it rather than celebrate it... I like it when things are vibrant rather than stagnant, when things jump out on you, rather than being austere all the time. Sometimes you even feel you shouldn't be there. It is more like art is the art of one person, not for the whole....And then, so much nostalgia...It is easy to do this, isn't it? (D., m, 33)

Participants who belonged in older age groups offered rich data on their perceptions about museums and galleries, too. They sometimes had contrasting views about the popularity of museums in Dundee in the past: even though many of them said that they did not feel particularly comfortable with the idea of going to a museum when they were younger, a lot of them also maintained that the museums in Dundee used to thrive with visitors:

Yi see this place used ti be the headquarters of Dundee, everyone used ti come in here. All the bus stops were aroond. When it rained whar wid yi go? Yi wid come in here. Yi see Dundee people are great readin people. Yi see, at the days of the jute mills yi had ti come ti the lehbray, yi had to come ti the museum, because people coodna afford radios an TVs an all that. Since the wages increased, I suppose different days different things. But this used to be a very busy plais here...Ah don't know why (they don't come any more), I ponder on this, yi ken?...The centre of the toon here was packed, what they call tenements...But now they are moved ti the housing schemes, so people moved away from the centre (L, m, 70).

-Ah remember when we were young, museums and libraries were mostly for other people. If yi went ti a library yi had ti be quiet, it was kind of awesome in a way. Even the statues looked at ya when yi went in, so unless yi really had a deep interest and wanted ti read and find books an whut huv yi, yi wid never enter their doors. Ah mean the museum assistants are much better now, but then, cuz we were ordinary people -so were they of course- but they kind of had this revered attitude....(G, f, 69)

-I think museums are really trying ti say now, this is for you, but loadz of people wid laugh if I said I was going ti a library or ti a museum... (N, f, 65)

-Why do you think they would laugh?

- Cuz its not for the likes of us, it iz for somebody else (N, f, 65).

- This is what they think at least. Because, probably in your country as well, back then everybody was in the same position, everybody was poor and although you were poor there was no stigma attached. But to me, there is a stigma now and it is more noticeable now than it was long ago for some strange reason (G, f, 69).

I. does not visit museums often. She agrees with other interviewees regarding the atmosphere prevailing museums. She said that she would only rarely visit with her husband, because he is interested in history. In fact, she seemed to feel unease with the fact that she was having a good time in the interview, laughing and sometimes being louder than she thought she should have been:

If we were ti come ti the museum, yi widna think that yi kid laugh and huv a carry-on like what we huv now, yi had ti be very solemn and quiet....Wrong, yi ken, but we huv this idea and we wid bring things on a par. For example, yi wid think the museum as a church an' yi wid never speak loudly or run in the church, wid ya? Nay chans, yi need ti huv respect (I, f, 57).

Similarly, older people from the ethnic minorities of Dundee, shared this feeling of alienation from the museums and galleries in the city. M., a woman from the Indian community in Dundee rarely visits museums. She remembers how she and her parents viewed museums when they first arrived in Scotland:

Museums? (laughs) No, nobody used to go to museums or anything like that...At those times they didn't know anything about museums. I don't think they were allowed to come to a museum...(M, f, 46)

For most of the interviewees from the Indian and Pakistani community, visiting museums and galleries was a rare occurrence. Most of them claimed that their culture and habits are different; therefore, they could find nothing of relevance in the exhibitions. Only those ethnic participants of a higher educational and occupational background supported that museums in Dundee have not really made attempts to approach the —by now second generation— immigrants in the city. Their absence from the museum narratives, especially in Verdant Works —where a large part of the jute workforce were people from South East Asia⁴²— was a major point of critique. Further, in terms of the Indian and Pakistani women, family commitments, like staying at home caring after their children, seemed to be the primary reason not to go to museums or galleries. Nonetheless, younger women would suggest that they do visit museums frequently and that their generation is more in tune with the leisure services in the city. None of them, though, considered museums as an educational resource.

Some of the interviewees found that there is a class divide permeating people's conceptions of museums and galleries. One of the participants, P., retired trade unionist and not frequent

⁴² Working on the jute, a plant fibre they knew well, was one of the main reasons they came to Scotland in the first place.

museum-goer, spoke about how his trade union made attempts in the past to work with the museum and exhibit trade union collections:

Museum is a facility that belongs to the people and when it comes to trade unions, we are considered a minority or something...Oh, you are a narrow group of people, sectarian, this is taxpayers' money, we can only hand it over to university professors or churches who supposedly open their doors to everybody (P, m, 68).

Living and being working class in Dundee was for many of the interviewees not only a reason for the lower social strata's non-participation in the museum; what was interesting is that this kind of background was thought to be consciously shaping their taste for some museums and distaste for others. T., middle-aged architect and keen museum goer, said about Verdant Works:

I think class divisions still exist. I think a lot of Dundonians wouldn't want to come here. No, because it would bring back what they would see as bad memories (T, m, 47).

The people from our status like, you know, lots of people from community centres, I think they find that Verdant Works is more them, you know? They can see themselves in there. In the likes of coming here [McManus Galleries], OK they come, fine they have a coffee but they think that this museum is for another class of people...I think that you find ordinary people, and I mean this in the nicest way when I say ordinary people, the people of Dundee, they feel that they are working class people, right? And the working class people from Dundee, they were the more Verdant Works style of people, you know what I mean, what they were doing and how they lived in tenements and all that. Now they have moved on, that's good, but I don't think that they will ever forget their roots, that's where their roots are (X, m, 57).

Other interviewees would broaden up the theme of the class divide. They talked about poverty and looked at museums as part of a culture that is elitist and belongs to dominant groups rather than ordinary people. Z., pub manageress, discussed with her friend Y. in the McManus Galleries:

-Ah don't have anything against museums. Ah jist feel once you've been, you've been, riyt? Ah think what they have here iz beautiful but it iz money-oriented in a way, izn't it? (Z, f, 57)

-But also once you've seen all that, Ah don't understand how people can come and stand in front of a picture and say 'oh meh goad, look at that!', ji ken? I think it iz jist showing aff, I think (Y, f, 61).

-I kind of think ji ken, therez poverty all over the world, not just India, Greece anywhere. And therez poverty in Dundee, riyt? Therez people starving, it's not that everybody can get inti the system and be part of the system and earn money, ji ken? (Z, f, 57)

-Yes, yes, I think that the people who come and gaze at these pictures...it is just snobbishness (Y, f, 61).

-Don't get me wrong, I respect the Queen, I would fight for my Queen, but by the same token how can she sit in all that luxury when people like us are on the breadline? (Z, f, 57)

-Oh, you've got her started now...(Y, f, 61).

Many of the interviewees saw museum visiting as a habit that someone acquires at a young age through the family; therefore, for many of the participants, either people are brought up this way or they are not. For those interviewees, museum and gallery visiting is more a matter of acquired taste or education rather than class attribute. For A., manager, recently employed in Dundee:

It depends if people have a certain disposition for exhibitions. When I was younger my parents took me to loads and loads of exhibitions, almost every weekend I was going to an art gallery or a museum. ...For example, I have this friend....We went together to Madrid, on holidays. He is well-educated but he didn't have any appreciation for art whatsoever, he thought it was stupid. It is certainly not because he came from a not privileged background, he was, his father was a director. I would say it depends on the way he was brought up. I suspect your parents have a strong impact on your appreciation, more than you realise. The family, the schooling, the social environment, the people you mix with. But then again you always get people who are stubborn, who don't like it just for the sake of not liking it (A, m, 25).

E., retired Indian lecturer, living in Dundee for 40 years now, gave a similar view about how the people from his community view museums:

There are museum people and there are non-museum people, isn't it? My wife is so interested in museums but I am not so much, it differs from people to people. It depends if their mother and father has taken those people to museums at all. As I told you, India doesn't have very many museums, except from the bigger cities. There aren't museums in the small cities, so the museum culture is not there (E, m, 66).

A less common trend was to look at museums and galleries as sources of civic pride or tourist attractions:

I think there is an advantage with museums, I am not saying that people should go to museums every week, but it's good to have them. Say now your brother is on holiday here, well, you like to go to places and see what the place is about, what do they have there? ...Here is where the museum can bring things to life (F, f, 51).

Every city should have a museum, if not more than one, they are integral to the culture of the city. They are pride in your city, sources of pride for the city (A, m, 25).

Finally, a number of participants showed that they are aware of changes taking place in museums over the last decades:

I think it is your attitude towards museums: museums used to be old, smelly places, you know, old stuff. Obviously this is changing...I have always liked going to museums, I am not great in history but you can come here and see stuff (H, f, 36).

To summarise, regarding participants' more general perceptions towards museums and galleries, it appeared that both regular and non-regular visitors would support that museum visiting can be tedious, but some of them acknowledged that they have seen changes towards making exhibits more interesting and engaging with the public. Those not visiting frequently would even make comparisons of museum to church or library visiting. Younger people spoke about peer pressure not to appear interested in an educational or leisure activity of this kind. They often seem to feel that museums are meant to be visited either by children or older people. Nevertheless, some younger participants supported that they would not choose museums as a place to have fun with their children either. Interestingly enough, many of the older visitors agreed that learning in museums is mainly for children, therefore they said they would only visit them with their children or grandchildren.

Family upbringing, culture and a more general disposition towards art appreciation were the reasons more regular visitors gave regarding their museum visiting habits, whereas others would directly criticise museums as being snobbish and elitist. Some would use notions such as class to explain the interviewees' negative stance towards the museum. Ethnic minority participants, like all the other participants, gave a diversity of views regarding the museums in Dundee. Depending on education, occupation, gender and age, their comments ranged from constructive critique to endorsement of museums as places of interest. Finally, many interviewees saw museums as visitor attractions and sources of information for the area for non-locals, and hence argued that museums in Dundee are not really meant to cater for *their* education or leisure, but for tourists.

2. Organised educational provision

The second part of the interview focused more closely on the educational provision in the museums and galleries under examination.

a. Interactive and audio-visual support

The interviewees were asked about their views on the hands-on media, the touch screens and other multimedia facilities offered in the museums. Surprisingly, many of the participants seemed to look at these developments with a sceptical mind:

Sometimes all these arcades kind of make it work against what you really want. It is kind of overdoing it, putting too much into it, especially with older people. They sometimes

don't understand the use of these things. Younger people find them more interesting (O, m, 48).

Children like hands-on exhibits, but these are not particularly good for adults, no (Q, f, 57).

I think they (interactive computer screens) have a use to a certain extent but I don't think they are substitute to a guide that is actually here telling you, that you can ask questions. I believe there is a role for guides and there always will be. A computer screen can tell you only so much....People want to join in, to be part of the experience and a computer screen can't give you that. If you have a guide, then people ask certain questions and that can then sparkle further questions. As a result more knowledge will come out of the guide and the visitor will have a fuller experience (R, m, 34).

U., a quite active retired female teacher, participant in many workshops in her community centre, admitted:

These interactive things are really beyond me I suppose, I am not very much into personal computers and all that. I mean I have tried, I went to 'computer for the terrified', that's how it was called, and then I went to 'computer for the less terrified'...This doesn't mean of course that I am any better. Plus, I don't have the money to buy a computer. But I guess I would use them a little bit probably. It gives you an extra bit than what is on the walls (U, f, 66).

In an interview at Verdant works, participants from the Turnaround Project did not seem very interested in using the touch screens in the exhibition space. Instead, they were trying to concentrate their attention to the volunteer guide:

-It was difficult to listen to him because of all the music at the back....

-*You mean the touch screens?*

-Aye.

-*I saw that none of you spent any time using the touch screens, except from Michael. How is that? You don't like them?*

-This is what I am sayin, some of the computer screens, they were speakin at the same time the man was. That annoyed me... I haven't tried them, I don't like them. But my grandchildren would enjoy them, definitely (V, m, 60).

In a different interview at Verdant Works, one of the interviewees had a totally different perspective in relation to the interactives used:

I was in a museum in Ireland, I think it was a monastery...They have computerised displays, the best I have ever seen, a real state in the art. I know how computer visualisations can be like. Well, here, when you walk through and each part lights up, it is a little bit...You have to understand, you compete with cinema. It is a bit dated, if you see what is going on in the rest of Britain and abroad (T, m, 47).

On the other hand, most interviewees that visited Verdant Works or Discovery Point seemed to enjoy the audiovisual media a lot. As seen in the previous chapter, Verdant Works

presents a video screening at the beginning of the visit as an introduction to the exhibition. Further, there are workers' stories that people can listen to while they are walking in the factory area, while seeing the machines being operated by volunteer ex-mill workers. This was described by many interviewees almost as a show which they did not expect to experience in an industrial museum. As discussed, Discovery Point also presents a series of video screenings which give an account of the expedition according to its different phases. Here are some comments from the interviewees on both museums:

What I loved there is that one of the whalers, while you were sitting there, you would just see him in front of you. It was like he was speakin to you. I meen, I loved it, it waz great (R, m, 34).

What I liked about the video is that I could directly relate to it. Even to me, as a younger person, you know, my father used to work in the mills and I am sure everyone knows somebody who worked in the mills. It is not just like when you are going to any other museum. Like in London for example, you go there, you see the mummies. That's all very good but where are the connections? (W, m, 35)

As expected, interactive exhibits and audio-visual resources were the focus of the discussions in Dundee Heritage Trust, since their presence in the exhibition space is a major part of the museum experience. Nonetheless, interviewees in the McManus Galleries did not seem to feel that their absence in the exhibition space meant that the visit would be less exciting; as will be shown later, even though many of them mentioned that the glass cases and the text panels often looked dated, they proposed guides rather than interactive media as the way of improving the learning provision through the displays.

Most interviewees agreed that audio-visual material is beneficial towards a fuller experience, when used in moderation; interactive exhibits on the other hand, did not appeal to adult visitors. On the contrary, their association with children did seem to alienate older visitors from the displays.

Almost all participants, both regular museum visitors and non-visitors found that assistance in the museum space through guides or museum attendants adds value to their learning experience:

Without the guide it would be a dead show (T, m, 47).

When I first took Stephen to Verdant Works, I asked the guy there, 'Do me a favour and turn that on so that he can see' and he switched it on... So then Stephen was like 'Oh, my god!'. The guy then asks me 'Did you work in the mills?' and he says to my son 'Imagine how your mother used to work on that'. I think it is so good that Verdant

Works has the guides who switch the machines on so that people can see the conditions we worked under (Z, f, 57).

b. Talks, tours and workshops

In regard to the more organised expression of the educational offer for adults in museums, like talks, workshops or any other activities, rich data was collected on the participants' attitudes. Some of the answers given concentrated on the lack of such activities. In other cases, they were surprisingly frank regarding their effectiveness and the levels of enjoyment and learning obtained:

For children there are workshops, but then there is nothing for adults. For the Hawkhill exhibition there were gallery talks and meet the photographer days but there is never a complete mix, it is either one or the other. As far as the adults are considered they never had really any other activities apart from talks. Obviously this is something that has to be developed. If they had a way of showing how an artwork is created, I think a lot of people would have an interest in that, how much skill it takes, how delicate it is, even the price that it takes to make it in the first place (R, m, 34).

Some of the research participants took more of a 'gendered' approach to the activities offered in the museum, while others did not seem to agree with this view:

It depends on your interests you know, from person to person. For example ladies will go more for these kinds of things like weaving or printing, whereas I would like to do more research work (J, m, 48).

I think you need to have some interest in what is going on otherwise you wouldn't come, would you? I am not interested in weaving so I wouldn't have come to anything like that, but maybe they did it to get younger kids interested (G, f, 69).

A lot of participants said that even though they would want to participate in museum activities, they could not find the time to do it. Some seemed to enjoy activities set up for them after the museum visit, whereas few others did not think that activities for adults are the proper way to approach learning in the museum:

One of the things we did with the group is go down to the DCA and we saw an exhibition and then we had to write about it. Well, some of the staff I saw I didn't like one bit, but I don't think I would have got much out of it if I didn't go with the group, taking part in this activity. These exhibitions, all modern stuff and the like, do not appeal to me at all (U, f, 66).

I wouldn't want to do activities. I mean it would be good to have a facility for people who want to do these things, but these are mainly for children. I think sometimes interactive displays, how they call it, dumb down. There is a lot of dumbing down, you know. In some exhibitions, there is a room where children can draw and I think that's good, that's educational (T, m, 47).

A retired woman in her late 60s and keen museum visitor, gave a different dimension on what kinds of activities she enjoyed more:

I did come two years ago, I was coming for a few weeks because there was a wee course on, it was called 'Create'. ...Yeah, we were going down to the stores, where they pulled out the pictures on a lever, take out the different things and we could see things that we would never see otherwise. It was very interesting, very interesting. But afterwards that was the end of that, it only lasted for so long...The carrot, the spice, you know what I mean, was that after the visit we would have a cup of tea. This is where you can get a bit of chit chat...(AB., f, 67).

Hands-on activities have been probably the most debatable issue for the study interviewees. The provision of talks and tours for adult visitors was often considered a more traditional approach, against which interviewees argued for educational sessions for adults. Nevertheless, when activities for adults were indeed organised, research participants seemed disappointed by the limited spectrum of what was available. Male interviewees often found activities feminine in nature, but women participants attributed the focus of many of the sessions in a museums' effort to attract younger participants. Most interviewees, even though debating about what the focus of sessions should be, seemed to agree on the benefits of meeting with other people in educational programmes of this kind, talking, sharing and enjoying the museum visit together with others. Even when the session was not 'hands-on' but more about exploring aspects of the museum previously unknown (like a walk in the museum storerooms, as described above), it was the 'chit chat' that was valued more during the visit in the museum.

This argument was to be repeated by many of the research interviewees. This 'social' way of learning could be ascribed to the size of Dundee as a smaller city, where the less hectic urban lifestyle still allows plenty of free time for social encounters. More importantly, it could be attributed to the learning styles of most of the interviewees, who were already enjoying being part of a group and learning together with others. However, on the basis of the museums' (both in Dundee and further afield) argument for supportive educational programmes that aim to 'generate' confident, independent visitors, it would be interesting to examine this contrasting picture. Instead of visiting the museum on their own, interviewees supported that the social aspect of the visit could sometimes be more enjoyable than merely visiting the exhibition itself. Indeed, many of them that had taken part in educational sessions especially at the DCA and McManus before, said that they had never been to the museum/ gallery ever since.

c. Exhibition interpretation and text

Many interviewees connected learning in museums and galleries with the exhibition text, namely the information they can read and absorb from the exhibition panels. A lot of them made also broader connections between the exhibitions' text and exhibition interpretation, attempting to disentangle narratives constructed through the use of the visual and the written word. Most of them said that they would be reluctant in spending a lot of time reading the panels, however there were also some who thought that they are essential in order to make meaning of the artworks. In brief, the majority of the research participants were not pleased with the text panels at the exhibitions at all four sites; they found them too brief and not comprehensive enough:

As you saw these people just walked passed this. No one is going to look at this piece here because what are they going to take from it? Why haven't they labelled it?...You can get your own interpretation yes, but if there is not something there to start you off then you can't get very far. This exhibition is good, the information was there. People draw meaning but you have to see where the artist is coming from. There's a difference between telling people and giving meaning to things; people will get their own meaning. You can never find out what the people are thinking, they would always give their own meaning (at the DCA, A, m, 25).

I think it's wrong not to have panels because that increases people's fears that they will not understand. If you give them some information, they can make the connections themselves. This way you give them a bit of power. If you don't have any interpretation, I think you take that power away from them and you sort of feed this inferiority complex. I would say in all instances have text and maybe a guide as well. The human stories, the human touch are just as vitally important as the technical stuff, and I think there should be a balance between the two. Give people the choice. (at McManus, R, m, 34)

S: *Would you read the panels here?*

Oh, yes I would, this is the only way that I could understand it. I would put the effort, yes. I like to see where he is getting at, if I hadn't read that I would have no clue what he means (at McManus, AC, f, 53).

However, on other instances, the research participants did not seem to be keen on reading the text panels anyway; they would argue that they are too long, often incomprehensible and sometimes misleading. Few of the women from an Asian background were illiterate, but many found the panel language difficult to understand. The following episodes are typical of people's reactions in the McManus galleries, during the exhibition 'Reflections', an art exhibition featuring the newly acquired artworks for the museum's collections:

-I: Whut? Whut's this? If yi hadn't explained it ti me, I wid nivir huv got that! (N, f, 65)

-Ti me, I know this is terrible, but I wouldn't even know what they mean by this 'covert tension', what does this mean? (G, f, 69)

-I think it means a hidden tension...

-This certainly wouldn't have explained much to me (G, f, 69).

-What do you think about the language used here?

-The language shouldn't be simple. I guess these things are complicated. It also depends on the time of the day that you come in, if you are tired you might not understand (G, f, 69).

-No, come on! Why are you saying this? It should be simple. It should be in layman's terms, in layman's terms, this is how it should be (N, f, 65).

- 'The construction of illusionistic space...'...I suppose...yes...(hesitates). Well, eh dinna ken (AD, f, 53).

-Yes, sometimes it goes over your head, definitely. It was all right for him to put that down but we don't understand (AE, f, 58).

-We haven't been to university like him (AD, f, 53).

-We have been to the University of Life (AE, f, 58).

Both (laughter): Yes, yes...that's right.

-It is sometimes the wording that is difficult (AD, f, 53).

A number of interviewees encountered problems in reading small fonts on the boards. Others had criticisms about texts not being focused enough or just using bad English:

Well, it takes a lot to read this, I would just skim it. I do read the labels, but sometimes there is a long piece of writing and you think I will never get through that, you know? (U, f, 66)

Written word is always harder to understand than the spoken word, most of the times the language in panel writing is not very good. I'd rather read a book about it, than read a panel. (T, m, 47)

Other interviewees commented that it is the content of exhibition text that they find misleading or prescriptive, whereas they would like to be uninfluenced in constructing their own interpretations. In the photographic exhibition of Hawkhill in Dundee (McManus Galleries), participants said:

I like just to see the pictures, to let them talk to me rather than text and text all the time...Maybe just a comment from the people in the pictures would be nice, eh? It would be nice to be able to listen to some stories, people's stories at the same time as looking (D, m, 33).

I do find that I tend to ignore these as well (the labels). They almost give an image as well and I think... I don't like prescriptions, I like to find my own meanings (AF, f, 41).

I read things but when you come to a gallery you always come to see things and you come with your own interpretation. So you can't really get away from thinking from your own point of view, your own perspective. Anything that you see is trying to communicate something and I think that everybody would understand it in a slightly different way (AG, f, 32).

Non-frequent visitors would see exhibition text panels mostly as labelling artworks and artefacts, where a title might suggest a possible meaning to the work of art, or a name, place and date would give some of the background of an artefact; however, they would not read longer texts, in contrast to more frequent visitors, who would normally use this information to capture the exhibition narrative. Art galleries like the art section of McManus and DCA do not use longer text panels anyway; especially with DCA, any information that might clarify aspects of the work of the artist or the exhibition is given through a leaflet or at the information space separate from the galleries. McManus art galleries, on the other hand, do not provide the visitor with any explanation at all; the art works are meant to say themselves all the visitor might need to know. Again, the mystery of art is not to be revealed through words—inside the gallery, seeing is believing.

On the contrary, text is a powerful tool for the construction of the story of the jute and RRS Discovery in Dundee Heritage Trust; in both museums, the combination of artefacts, guides, audio-visual material and text panels offers visitors detailed information. Nonetheless, where the story is constructed and presented in such an explicit manner to the visitor, there bound to be voices of resistance:

I would say that a lot of things in here are written in a quite paternalistic mode. It is kind of talking down Dundee working class people. And people have their own pride. But I don't know how to... Maybe if there was less split, maybe the folk called the ordinary Dundonians would tell their story and that story could be heard... People from my mum's generation would look with nostalgia at their lives, at the closes and the platties... When you read some of the things here, a lot of Dundonians would find them offensive (T, m, 47).

I was told this story once, that there was a charity football match game played in Dundee every year in June between the butchers and the ministers—and the butchers would come with their stripy uniforms and the ministers with their bibles, but it was for charity, it was fun... And then I wondered why aren't these stories presented here... What is on display is the curator's interpretation whereas someone who has lived through the period would have a complete different viewpoint and what would probably be important to the curator, the actual person might find boring or irrelevant to them. But I think funny little stories stay in people's minds longer (AH, f, 38).

Exhibition text, as a vital part of the exhibition interpretation, often seems to be caught in a vicious circle; when not there, it seems to be missed, but when present, it is ignored or criticised. Regular visitors seemed to rely more on it for their visit, whereas non-visitors would just skim through it, rather than read in detail.

Apart from the more technical aspects of the size of the fonts, the position and the length of the text panels in which most interviewees focused their answers, only few of them went a

bit further into talking about the content. Some of them argued against prescribed meanings attributed to the exhibits, and others used their personal experience to criticise one-sided constructions of the exhibition narrative. Nonetheless, few interviewees saw exhibitions as a form of (hi)story-telling, seen from a single vista. Most of them, even those who visit often, would identify different themes developed in separate galleries and use the limited text in relation to making sense of single exhibits, rather than following a longer story-building exercise.

However, the approach in the presentation of social history in the McManus and Verdant Works and the use of text panels in both galleries were reflected in the interviewees' comments; they were both seen as dated and often nostalgic, giving snapshots of Dundee's history, without a coherence or focus. Views sometimes ranged from finding the narrative 'rebellious' to characterising it as 'paternalistic'. In any case, research participants were much more inclined to comment and critically appraise the exhibition narrative according to their personal experiences, knowledge and beliefs.

3. Educational experiences

In this section I am going to present interviewees' views on what they themselves would describe as education in museums and galleries. Most of the regular visitors thought of museums as educational institutions and argued that learning something new is the primary reason for visiting. The majority of the people who do not tend to visit museums acknowledged them as spaces for learning as well; what was interesting is that, for quite different reasons, they implied or explicitly said that it is their educational/didactic aspect that deters them from visiting.

It was also interesting to see the diversity of what was considered learning in the museum: from learning factual information, to remembering, discussing, feeling, or simply finding room to think. Experiences varied from very negative to extremely positive and this again depends very much on the individual participant: their age group, gender, occupation as well as how often (or not) they visit museums and galleries. KA., a young man who does not like going to museums, does not see learning the same way as AG., a female doctoral student does:

-How would you compare museums with schools?

-Oh, museums are worse than schools, definitely (KA, m, 17).

-How's that?

-Because apart from all the history, yi are walkin about, gettin sore feet. And also I am a loud person, don't like to be quiet (KA, m, 17).

Looking at art helps me think further, think outside of myself. It makes you think about your place in the world, in the whole universe, so it's both learning about your inside and outside (AG, f, 32).

There were many interviewees that described museums and galleries as educational sites for giving them the opportunity to break from the routine of work and find some room for contemplation, as well as discussion. Dialogue and debate seemed to be an integral part of what many participants saw as learning in the museum:

-When Dundee Contemporary Arts opened a few years ago, well, we went as a group and it was educational in loadz of ways. We walked roond and then we went ti a room and we discussed and I thought I huv to go roond again because I never saw half of what they were talking about. So it iz good to listen to what the other people have to say and what they experience (N, f, 65).

-And especially how they see things, because you might see the same thing with different eyes. Sometimes you don't see things they way other people do (G, f, 69).

I think that in any community, a community is about bringing people together who are not necessarily identical and all the same. I think the community is made by lots of different kinds of people, it just asks from people to draw things together and share something and experience something. I think that churches and museums, both do that, they allow us to think about things and stop from the business of life and really contemplate (AG, f, 32).

-How would you like to spend your time in the museum?

-Learning to do something....mixing with other people...just sit about and chat...meet, meet other fowk....just do somethin, yi ken, it keeps you goin, it is good to learn (AD, 58, f).

It is definitely better to share the museum experience with other people. It is probably one piece of art that catches someone's eye, which might be different from someone else's experience and then you discuss it. There is always a discussion going on, which makes it more exciting. It is quite good. This way you learn some stuff, but I think I like museums and displays for the imagination, for seeing something new. May be you already know something, but you see it from a different viewpoint, you see someone else's thoughts about things (D, m, 33).

-I guess for me learning in museums is more about personal refreshment, I don't know, just see something different, to get away of it all. Eh, to have a space to think, that's what I like about it. It is not so much what is presented to an extent, it's more to do with just space. I like the environment more so than what is actually shown there, if what's shown is good, then great but it's the actual atmosphere that I like more (AI, m, 27).

Other interviewees, especially those that belong to older age groups saw learning in museums as a way to be social or find creative ways to spend their free time:

Em, I like to be involved in activities, say drama for example. Nothing fancy, wee bits and pieces, see the characters comin' alive sort of thing. I remember I was in this drama workshop and there waz kinda of a mixture: two Pakistani girls, a cockney girl and three fay Dundee... Well, you know this, I might not have an awful lot of drama but, you know this, I have learned a marvellous amount of the cultures of those people and that's the most important thing (AB, f, 67).

People over 50 odds lose their jobs and then they have nothin ti do, such a pehst... This is how, you see, there are so many 50+ groups...In the past yi widna go ti groups unless yi were over 60-70. ...Ah meen, people over 50 do loadz more things that they were not able ti do when they were younger. A lot of them might like go roond museums... My sister took up French, Ah started learnin story tellin....(AJ, f, 47).

AC., Adult Learner of the Year in 2004, wrote a poem about the jute industry in Dundee two years ago, during a visit in Verdant Works:

It is mehr interactive here, it brings you back into that time, it puts you back to that reality, through the headphones and see the machinery workin....I like the machinery because it is like the real stuff and how it was like back then. What I really like is the beat of the machinery. When I came here two yeers ago I wrote a poem about the machines:

...

(AC. recites the poem almost in a 'rap' mode in the museum, he is clapping his hands according to the beat of the machines. His loud voice dominates the space. I am thinking that it must be the most vivid and loud sound that has been heard in this place since the days of the mill operating).

...

Ah wrote this poem havin the earphones on, just listenin to the beat of the machinery, just wanted to feel the way those workers felt when they were workin. For me, it is about finding who you are. My granny had told me many stories and Ah come here and see this is what she had to go through, proud to be here (AC, m, 35).

Q. is a teacher. She used to work for Dundee High School, which is located opposite McManus. It is interesting to look at how she considers museums as educational establishments when it comes to bringing her class in. However, when it comes to herself visiting McManus as an individual, she makes a very interesting distinction of what counts as a learning experience and what doesn't:

I used to bring the classes over, you see we are just opposite. This is an aspect of learning in museums I guess, something might trigger children's curiosity, I remember how they liked how the rooms on the ground floor are set up.

...

I mostly go for the colours and shapes of things. However, when the name of the artist strikes me, if I have heard about him before, I know he is famous etc., I go back and try to find the style of his paintings. This is like a little game I play...I wasn't artistic myself, but I like just to enjoy it.I appreciate different things because artists need to get something different and new all the time, so I admire this effort. I try to understand it, I don't dismiss it. But no, no, no, I don't go for the learning. It is the experience here and now that I appreciate, I wouldn't make an effort to remember anything really (Q, f, 57).

Other interviewees had a broader understanding of what learning in a museum or a gallery might suggest, including critical thinking, politics, history and interaction with the artefacts:

I think I always learn things in museums, but mostly I learn about change. You see how times change, you can sense the history (D, m, 33).

One of the few places left where you can raise issues about politics and understand politics is the museum. Politics is the science to govern, you Greeks must know better about politics. In order to do politics, you have to understand the past so that you know where you are going, what you want to do, what you want to achieve. But no brainwashing, we need understanding (L, m, 70).

You don't always have to understand what you see and what you are being exposed to. You can just enjoy it for the sake of seeing how somebody goes about interpreting something. The basis of modern art is more traditional forms anyway, so it is not for a laugh and it is not that artists can't really draw. For various reasons they decide that they want to depart from those traditional ways of doing things and do things that break barriers and ideas and perceptions of art and thought. I think that they challenge the way people think as well and I think that when people are looking at things that they don't understand it makes them engage more with what they see and it allows them to think more for themselves and not receive things in a passive way but be more interactive (AG, f, 32).

P., former trade unionist and not frequent museum goer, when asked about the educational role of the museum, gave his answer on the basis of structural inequalities that condition what counts as education. Despite the lengthy quote, it is worthwhile to follow his train of thought:

-Do you think museums are places for learning?

-Well, they are not schools in that sense, and I wasn't schooled enough so I always thought when I came in the museum 'yi shood be interested in this, yi shood get somethin oot of this instead of always lookin for a pint of beer...' But, ti tell you the truth, the bulk of communication and interaction between people has always been the pub...People here are kinda toffee-nose and how can I describe it...they speak in this so un-dundee way.

-Do you think that this puts people off?

-Well, you don't fit in, but I guess everyone is the same. You really find yourself daunted and it is not because of them, it is because of you. This museum belongs to the local council which practically should be the people. This is one of the contradictory things, you've got tax-payers' money which means that everyone's paying the state so that the money is fed back to the community, where is needed.

...

Today universities are used to hide people, store 'em...well, if yir a royal prince yi can take geography...What did I get, I got metal work, wood work. This iz where education can put people to a disadvantage you know...There's an academic, he says this is an artefact, it is such and such, he is believed. And what about us, the ordinary people? Education gives an advantage to people right from the start. It's not that it's me to blame or them, this goes back to histry, education has always been like that. On the other hand, you hear someone say 'I read history', well will that ever help you in learning to clean this room? Ah believe in readin and writin, Ah didn't have any other education whatsoever, no universities or museums or such things, but Ah feel that Ah have learned all my life. Ah got the street credit, yi ken? (P, m, 68)

AG., student, and member of the Creative Writing group at Hilltown Horizons, likes art and visits DCA quite often. She was very revealing about her experiences in art galleries, where she has been going from a young age, as well as about the Creative Writing Group. For her, learning in the art gallery is not about facts or achieving outcomes. Instead, she supports that learning in the museum is about democracy and equality:

I think that what is actually difficult is to get people through the door, then it is easy for them to realise what is there and enjoy... it is about allowing people to realise that their way of understanding and expressing something is just as valid as someone else's. So I think it is about breaking down barriers with people, especially with people that have had many bad experiences in schools and growing up. Because, you know, there is always a right way and a wrong way often in learning, there is a right answer and a wrong answer. I think people need to be educated in museums to realise that their ways are equal and valid.

...

I think that people in the creative writing group, what they get out of that is that they can write in their own voice, in their own dialect, they don't have to write in standard proper English. That is why that group is successful, because it opens up channels of expression for them. I think that yes, museums unfortunately, maybe not intentionally but, maybe what is communicated to more disadvantaged people is that what is exhibited is a world so very different, almost alien to the people from disadvantaged backgrounds...So I think that often the message is you won't understand this because it is so so different from your experience, it is a different world (AG, f, 32).

Finally, AK. summarised his involvement in the consultation process that took place about the refurbishment of the McManus galleries two years ago as follows:

The discussions were about what we thought, what we wanted from the museum after the refurbishment of the two years. And there were ex-architects, ex-journalists, artists from DC Thompson, ex-academics and a few members from retired groups, all very higher education people, and we were the only ones who were there, the rough end, y'ken?...There are always upper or upper-middle class people in those committees and they think in that manner, they want to see jewels and crowns (*pointing to the glass cases*). If the jewels and crowns were connected with the workin people then that's fine, they would be interested in them, they would say we bought these things. But what do they say now? We paid for these things (AK, m, 66).

Some of the interviewees would explain people's non-participation in the museums in Dundee as a conscious resistance:

It is not just Dundonians, it is all European nations, there is a need to say we are getting better, we are getting better to a secular heaven on earth...Maybe that's the story that is told about the two kids through there, the one we didn't stay to watch. To tell you the truth, I wouldn't want to watch it, because the one who was so-called poor, might have actually had a better existence. Could well do, I can imagine that he did. I have no recollection of being overcrowded, I have no recollection of being insanitary, we would go to the garden, my dad had an allotment at the back of Law Hill, we would swim at the docks, we were happy...(DE, f, 55).

Research participants, when asked about informal learning experiences in the museum, brought in many different aspects of what they perceive as education in museums. Interviewees, probably with the experience of the adult learner as members of community groups, identified multiple sources of learning derived from the encounter with the objects, amongst which opportunities for dialogue, contemplation, imagination, thinking about politics, equality and democracy. On the contrary, people that felt that were part of becoming 'included' as part of a 'mainstreaming' exercise, as it was often the case with young people, stated their dislike for museums in the most direct way. Participants, when asked about education through exploring artefacts and artworks, rarely used examples from the more structured learning sessions they visited; the most memorable educational moments seemed to come more often when sharing exhibitions with friends or exploring ideas on their own.

4. Ideas for change - Suggestions for a different kind of museum education

The final part of the accompanied visit focused on participants' views on the ways museums in Dundee might improve the educational provision for adults. Interviewees had interesting suggestions, in regard to finding different ways of enhancing the museum experience. Most of them stressed the need for discussion and dialogue in the museum, as well as collaboration with the communities for creating the exhibitions:

If communities contributed to museum exhibitions more, you would get more people coming in because people would be interested in it, they would be involved in it...But would the staff of the museum be willing to give up that power of deciding on what goes in the exhibition space? That's their job, that's what they enjoy doing, I don't think so (A, m, 25).

It is a good idea when galleries are two-sided and people can contribute in some way to what is being produced so that it is not all one-sided and the artists come to the galleries and show their work. It is really good if the artists can enable people from the community to be involved in producing things themselves. So it is really a process of interpreting life and the way they see things and be able to understand their place and have a sense of community. It is a human relationship and I think that the artists and the community can work in partnership together, it doesn't always have to be one-sided (AG, f, 32).

Most interviewees also suggested that the inclusion of ordinary people's stories, narratives and experiences in museums would make the visit far more interesting and educational:

It would be nice if they asked for direct memories about the area, how was it really like. The public would have a lot of reminiscence and probably then we could discuss why did you do this, why making this exhibition was a good idea...Maybe then we could

make this applicable to where you come from yourself, what kind of changes has your area gone through, why, did it make it better, did it make it worse, does it have character any more? The public would discuss it in groups and tease out all other issues. You never know, somebody might have worked in the area and know the stories of the mills, the factories, all those kind of things (AL, m, 37).

(I like) the less formal stories, I think, to hear a story from someone that has been there and worked for that industry that has plenty of stories to tell, I think that there are little things that are funny or moving than having a long sheet to read. Hence I think the idea of a guide is very good because you focus more on what is being said rather than read and forget....(R, m, 34).

Ah think you should ask the people when you make an exhibition. It is their toon, it is their history. Put somethin' in the paper, ask them how they like it to be. We should get it across to people, get it round. It is the people's museum, it is the people's history so Ah think you should ask them (AC, m, 35).

On the other hand, those more interested in art, would attempt to find the middle ground where art could become relevant and interesting for the ordinary public:

People want to come to an exhibition, to a gallery because they want to escape for a while from everyday life, but social issues shouldn't be dismissed either, that would be wrong. I think that there should be a place for both.... Museums shouldn't let that gulf be created between the high art and the people and their own everyday lives (TM, f, 34).

Finally, a number of interviewees seemed to like to look at museums and galleries as social spaces where learning occurs in ways distinct from the formal education provision:

Museums don't need to diversify, but here, for example, the café and the cinema are very strong pulling powers for people to come round. You've got multifunctionality in the actual museum space which is useful and I think, as a consequence, few museums do not have cafes. But there should also be thinking spaces in the museum, discussion spaces. They do not have to be part of the art work. It is a social event (at the DCA, A, m, 25).

You need to keep the interest, so you need to bring in the organisations, the scouts, youth groups and so on and so forth...But you need the facilities for these people to meet. In the past reading and writing was a problem here, what you need to do is to move forward with the people. If you are not to give them more things at least give them what you used to. You know here in Dundee, there was no way that you would ever pay for a room for a meeting. Places were always for free, now it is only money, money, money. It would be a good thing if they had a meeting place for old age pensioners or young people, you've got to think of those things. Or just offer a cup of tea for goodness sake. People will feed you with ideas, but you need to feed them first (P, m, 68).

5. The accompanied visits in the Dundee museums: reflections

During the nine-month fieldwork investigation, critical ethnography and participants' desire to voice their views became the stimuli towards questioning and re-examining not only museums' policies and practices, but also one's own pre-conceived ideas and frameworks of

reference. Indeed, participants' contribution opened up the space for a critical re-assessment of pre-fixed categories and schemas, in order to set the questions on the basis of the real, material and other conditions affecting people's views on museums.

Research participants talked about education in museums in ways that substantially differ from much of the dominant discourse around museum education, planned with objectives and measured against outcomes. For, how can one quantify resistance against a dominant presentation of history? How is critical positioning towards even one's own beliefs and ideas to be measured? How can imagination and contemplation become indicators of a successful educational programme? How would museums, when advocating the celebration of the individual visitor, make sense of the social and dialogic learning research participants seemed to largely prefer? How can 'audience development' and 'non-visitor' research make sense of some interviewees' class-based analysis for their distaste of museums? How can the discourse around 'needs' and 'users' fit into visitors' enlarged educational perspectives when they talk about politics and history?

The next chapter, the analysis of the research findings, will attempt to answer some of these questions.

Chapter 7

Research analysis

1. Introduction

This chapter focuses on a close examination of the main findings of this study. It is largely based on an analysis of the qualitative strand; the quantitative data were used to identify and interpret the participation trends of the local population in the museums and galleries of Dundee. The research findings are also discussed through the lens of wider developments in museum education policies and practices in the UK, as these were reflected in the review of the literature.

In particular, I am going to discuss the research findings in relation to the set of questions this study wanted to explore:

1. What are the adult education opportunities in the museums under consideration? What are the values underlying them? What sorts of curricula determine the content and pedagogical practices employed?
2. What is the impact of this provision and what are the reactions of the local population to it? What and how do adults learn in the museum? Which factors influence their educational experiences in museums? What are their views on the educational role of the museum? Finally, are there any alternative possibilities for adult education in museums and what are they?

2. The dominant trends of museum education in Dundee: pedagogies and values

a. Organised educational programmes

Despite the city's long tradition of adult and community education, one of the most striking research findings across the four museums and galleries in Dundee, is the limited number of organised educational programmes for adults. Their frequency ranges from rare (Dundee Heritage Trust), to basic (McManus Galleries), to fairly frequent, but mainly for younger adults

(Dundee Contemporary Arts). Instead, children and young people are the focus of the formal educational provision at all sites; only a few lectures and tours are intended for adults.

In all four museums, adult education programming has a strong arts and crafts focus. Indeed, mainly 'hands-on' activities, in combination with some 'talks and tours', dominate their programming. These arts and crafts sessions are delivered by artists; in the case of Discovery and Verdant Works, they are intended for children only, and are delivered by the educational officer. McManus Galleries and the DCA organise activities for adults that are generally considered as experiencing some form of disadvantage: young people with literacy problems, school drop-outs, people with a disability, young offenders and others. The arts sessions intend either to teach them a skill, or, mostly, fill their time in a 'creative and constructive' manner. On the other hand, workshops that are intended for the 'general' population are offered by the DCA, but at a fee; they usually involve arts training, such as photography or printing classes.

Those living in disadvantaged communities are regarded as most 'in need' of participatory educational programmes. All museums and galleries in the city promote their work as open and accessible to all; the greater the diversity that their 'audiences' presents, the better! A positive educational experience in the museum might reveal skills previously unacknowledged; it may also increase their confidence. Therefore, museum education was seen by the education officers as potentially contributing to disadvantaged groups' inclusion in their communities. In terms of young people in particular, educational programmes are thought to be offering them a safe place to spend their time, in order to avoid precarious situations in the streets, and at the same time the opportunity to explore more mainstream pathways into education or work. Indeed, the arts and crafts sessions at McManus and the DCA target mainly those youngsters who are not in education, employment or training⁴³. Their aim, sometimes explicit and often implicit, is to assist youngsters discover through the arts that side of education which schooling failed to give them: one that acknowledges their culture and turns learning into an enjoyable and social experience.

Indeed, far more young people and adults engage with the city's museums and galleries than ever before. As the DCA education officer supported, the small size of Dundee helps connect

⁴³ Young people between 16-18 years old who are 'not in education, employment or training', or more commonly called 'NEET' are at the centre of interest in Scottish education policy over the last few years (see Raffé, 2003).

people with museums through word of mouth or social networks. The three year refurbishment of the McManus could be proof of the increasing need for the city's main museum to respond to the greater local demand. On the other hand, DCA's very high visitor numbers show a trend of increasing interest and engagement with the creative arts in the city. Finally, the successful operation of the Dundee Heritage Trust has been seen as an example of how a more popular, 'visitor-friendly' exhibition can increase visitor numbers and revenue for the organisation. However, despite the steady increase of interest from the adult population for the museums and galleries of the city, numbers do not always represent the whole picture.

Bourdieu and Passeron's theoretical contribution on the power of education to legitimize and reproduce inequality (1977) is useful here. All three museum educators interviewed, though acknowledging the structural constraints that prevent many people from enjoying culture and the arts, place emphasis on individual agency as a form of overcoming the barriers to appreciating educational experiences in museums. This is a very interesting paradox: although 'disadvantaged' people are invited to the museum in groups, educational programmes are supposed to lead them into exiting the gallery space as individual, self-directed and self-assisted visitors. I have tried to show how the labelling of groups —such as 'visitors' and 'non-visitors'— might work in commercial settings, nonetheless it does not seem to be very fruitful in understanding museum participation. In addition, the notion that museum visiting is an preference that some have and others do not, prevailed in the accounts of the education officers in all museums under consideration; in other words, as Bourdieu and Passeron persuasively argue (1977), all education officers seemed to hope that by merely offering the opportunity to experience art and other museum collections in an enjoyable fashion, 'non-visitors' perceptions of museums and education in general, would change. However, the reality revealed through fieldwork was not so clear-cut.

Most of the 'non-traditional' museum visiting groups, and young people in particular, resist what they perceive as a deficient image of themselves in the museum. Even though they are encouraged to use forms of expression that they enjoy (for example 'DJing' or poetry writing), young people often treat museum educational programmes as part of a culture of therapy which, rather than engage with and challenge them in ways that are meaningful, characterises their lives as disoriented and in need of improvement. Young people came to McManus and the DCA with their particular cultural and social capital, which they did not feel was congruent with the

architecture, the exhibitions or the visitors of the museum. This is an important finding; even though young people's habituses are indeed formed in their specific social and cultural background, they could be seen as potentially more open to the new, inclusive museum. Indeed, older adults, as will be discussed later, would connect museums with elitism and upper-class culture. Young people resist and often oppose the museum culture for what the museum claims to offer today: an open, inclusive, active learning environment.

Ecclestone (2004; 2004b; Ecclestone et. al., 2005) has argued persuasively against the concept of a therapy culture in education. She argues that 'therapeutic education' is linked with learning initiatives which are dominated by objectives related to personal and social skills, emotional intelligence and self-esteem (2004). Rather than address participants as a group of people with shared or divergent beliefs and ideas, the sessions aim at addressing individual needs and interests. Educational goals that are connected with such strategies have been criticised for encouraging a culture of 'victim-hood' amongst the already disadvantaged visitors/ learners. Education as therapy further marginalises 'non-visitors' and replaces the pursuit of knowledge and understanding in the museum with the development of personal traits that, no matter how significant they might be, do not really prepare them to engage with the exhibitions in a meaningful way. Arts workshops offer them little in regard to understanding exhibitions, how histories are constructed and narrated and how their stories and views could become a valuable part of this narrative.

Indeed, the dialectical relationship of the inclusion/ exclusion discourse imposes a kind of truth on non-visitors set from above: it follows the assumption that the museum offers to non-visitors that which they lack. Educational sessions are not organised on the basis of the right of every citizen to be an active contributor to the history and culture which, after all, they may well own; instead, they have taken the form of making up a deficit by means of 'learning'. It is no wonder that, more often than not, young and disadvantaged groups resist rather than accept learning at the museum. Rather than adopt the passive role of the deficient visitor, this resistance is an active and informed process. They are not anxious when faced with the 'museum test', according to Bourdieu and Darbel (1991); they refuse to take it.

Further, the degree of organisation of the educational sessions differs substantially. Whereas McManus galleries did organise educational programmes for adults for some of its temporary

exhibitions, no strict structure and planning of their delivery was noted. Workshop themes were chosen on the basis of their relevance to the exhibition topic and according to how popular they might be for prospective participants. Instead of detailed planning of learning aims and outcomes, workshop leaders (from painters to DJs to dance teachers) were autonomous in choosing their approach. The informal nature of learning during these sessions was very much reflected in the equally informal and relaxed attitude of both museum staff and participants. In general terms, the aim was for participants to have a good time, learn something new and leave the museum with the desire to come back; this would constitute a successful educational programme for the old McManus Galleries. The presence of many young and older adults coming in the museum on rainy Saturday afternoons and spending some of their free time at the McManus activity room, filled the museum atmosphere with a sense of liveliness.

For the old McManus, a representative example of the dark, silent and austere atmosphere of the old museum world, the *Coming to our senses* (2002) exhibition signalled a new era; most of the workshops attended during fieldwork were organised around the *Flavour* exhibition, which, according to the education officer, could never have been mounted without the positive experience of an exhibition that significantly changed museum staff's perceptions about the educational potential of the museum. Indeed, staff seemed to be only slowly coming to grips with the change: especially during the dance and music workshops, surprised looks and smiles betrayed some degree of embarrassment. During workshops, participants were not tied to attending the session throughout; they were free to walk in the galleries to gather ideas, return, discuss, choose to work by themselves or with others. The general mood was one of creative energy, where participants were free to work their own way through the session, either focusing on learning some practical skills or share ideas and experiences. As a participant in the workshops myself, I was asked a few times to count the number of people attending, as well as take some photos. Nonetheless, apart from collecting such basic information, no other systematic planning and monitoring of learning outcomes or evaluation was delivered in the museum. High numbers of participants would mean that the programme was a success; unpopular educational programmes were not likely to be repeated.

Dundee Contemporary Arts, on the other hand, follows a very different way of coordinating, delivering and evaluating educational programmes. First, educational sessions are organised on a systematic basis for every exhibition. Whereas educational sessions at the McManus were not

offered for every temporary exhibition but only for some, DCA's 'community and education' programming is an inherent part of every new exhibition at the galleries. The McManus education officer did argue that education at the McManus was a core activity; nevertheless, it appeared more like an add-on that was sometimes on offer, but more often was not. On the contrary, learning and interpretation at the DCA are a substantial part of its work, as this is reflected at the gallery's policy texts and regular events programme. Educational activities are always publicised at the monthly DCA newsletter and distributed to every visitor of the gallery. The sessions' structure, aims and learning outcomes are carefully devised and clearly explained to workshop leaders at the period in between exhibitions⁴⁴. Even though educational sessions at the McManus were open to all members of the public, sessions at the DCA are mostly organised between the gallery and other learning or social work providers in the city. Workshops are not always one-off opportunities; their more structured and planned nature suggests that most of the times there is a series of sessions with a specific aim, delivered with the same group of—mostly— young people. Workshop participants work collaboratively or on their own; the session follows a structured sequence of activities, carefully controlled and monitored by the gallery staff. After a short walk around the gallery space, the rest of the educational programme is delivered in the activity room, where artists would show participants how to make mono-prints or some other form of artistic work; participants would then have a go themselves.

Even though the artists delivering the sessions were always young and enthusiastic, the informal nature of learning in the gallery was sometimes diminished due to the detailed organisation and structure of the activities: 'very much like school', as the education officer at the DCA said in one of her inductions for new members of staff. At the end of each programme, and particularly the end of each exhibition, extensive reporting of the delivery and outcomes of the programmes would be produced and often sent to previous, current or prospective funders.

By choice or necessity, a 'calculative rationality' (Bauman, 1992) dominates the thinking behind the organisation of educational programmes at the DCA, which allows little room to move and develop kinds of learning that could diverge from the prescribed learning outcomes. The

⁴⁴ At the DCA, due to the changing nature of the displays and the need to often totally re-arrange the architecture of the galleries for the need of each exhibition, there is always a period of around two to three weeks when the galleries are closed—it is the period when most of the educational sessions for the following exhibition are prepared as well.

colonisation of museum education by the logic of measurement and performance is to be found in the requirements of the close evaluation of the work of all the museums in the city, since it is only through 'proving' their worth through numbers and statistics that they can justify and ask for further funding. The findings of this study showed how some organisations in the city would pursue these strict measurements far more than others.

Habermas has argued against the colonisation of the lifeworld by technocratic forms of rationality (1989). Museums' preoccupation with relating museum education with specific learning outcomes that can be measured and reported is evidence of this trend. As discussed in the literature review, an anxiety is evident for education in museums to prove its worth through the quantitative measurement of performance and attainment that funders might find persuasive and therefore worth pursuing. Unlike the McManus Galleries, which did not work according to strict session planning and performance measurement, DCA offered a very detailed and structured educational provision, which had to be assessed following both formative and summative evaluations. However, as Thompson has argued, not everything that is measured is worth being measured (2002); as the interviews with the research participants clearly showed, museum educational perspectives that cannot be measured sometimes matter more.

The differences between the McManus Galleries and the DCA are very enlightening in relation to the structure and evaluation of educational programming in museums. McManus represents an example of the processes that were prevalent in the period of the 1980s-1990s in most large local authority museums, when the advantages of exploring the educational possibilities of working with young people and disadvantaged groups were becoming more and more evident. Sessions were not offered for all exhibitions; a more haphazard educational approach meant that education departments led a more vulnerable existence, with education officers not always in place (as is more or less the case with McManus) and museum staff slowly coming round to their organisations opening up and becoming accessible to wider communities. DCA, on the other hand, has a far more comprehensive and organised education and interpretation programming, that its centrality to the gallery's work is proof of the significance of learning for the post-museum and gallery.

Finally, throughout the fieldwork at the Discovery Point and Verdant Works, there was no provision of organised educational programmes for adults. Even though the education officer

gave an account of past projects with the Indian and Pakistani community, it was only school children who visited and took part in educational programmes in groups during this period. These sessions generally involved games and other 'fun' activities in the museum exhibition space. Again, both museums were being presented to youngsters as places for 'fun' and learning and promoted the idea of family visits by giving every pupil a free ticket for their parents for the next visit. The independent nature of the Trust sets a different policy in regard to education: social inclusion initiatives are left for those museums and galleries in the city which receive state funding, whereas Dundee Heritage Trust aims at expanding their visitor numbers and revenue by offering an enjoyable, 'value-for-money', 'hands-on' experience in the Discovery and Verdant Works (DHT, online).

Educational programming at the museums under investigation emphasises learning by *doing*. Education officers and workshop leaders promote active and experiential learning as the way for participants to acquire a new skill, create an artwork, boost their confidence and have a satisfying experience. Indeed, little in relation to the actual displays is said or done during these workshops. Instead, the actual content of the exhibition, the messages communicated, the alternative possibilities that could have been suggested, are ignored. Learning at these art sessions gives the impression of more of an activity contained in itself, self-consumed and unrelated to participants' lives, wider issues or the 'curriculum' of the museum exhibits.

Ultimately, dialogue is fairly limited; an active way of learning replaces any real discussions about history and art, about the historical and contemporary social issues they address, their alternative explanations and readings of reality or any other ways that people might interpret them. Even though educational programmes at the DCA and the McManus are very detailed in terms of addressing and organising the *processes* of learning in the museum, they do not address the *content* of the exhibitions, the *reasons* that content was chosen and the *new ways* it could be read or altered.

On the other hand, the comparison of the degree of structure and assistance given to non-visitor groups as against the interpretation for the rest of the visitors in the exhibition space is immense. When arts workshops offer minimal interpretation of the actual exhibitions, contemporary art retains its unintelligible, mysterious and hence powerful aura, while an assisted and structured experience is given to those that lack this kind of power or the cultural capital to appreciate it.

Museum educational programmes serve to legitimize the different positions that actors acquire in the museum field. People of more disadvantaged backgrounds are given the *opportunity* to become 'self-directed' visitors, like the rest; if they take it up or not becomes a question of personal taste or freedom, as the education officer at the DCA said. Nevertheless, the discourse of assisting visitors to become self-directed learners in the museum, in conjunction with creating equal opportunities for them for appreciating exhibitions, moves the responsibility of the reproduction of cultural capital and relations of domination away from museums to visitors themselves. Learning by doing might indeed improve the museum visit by adding a more participatory element, which was always missing in the passive models we have known so far. However, an active way of learning in the museum, when translated only through 'doing' rather than thinking and discussing, is arguably too reductionist a way of interpreting action. It is not that arts and crafts are a superficial way of engaging with the exhibition; they are simply not the *only* way.

Finally, in terms of museum outreach, the old McManus Galleries was the only museum in the city which was active in getting out to the community, encouraging and preparing disadvantaged or other groups for a visit in the museum. As the education officer said, doing outreach work meant that people who would not visit museums because of lack of confidence, interest or awareness, had the opportunity to discuss exhibition topics and contribute their perspectives. The education officer, together with artists delivering the workshops, would make repeated visits to youth or other community groups, and work with them extensively in thinking and developing exhibition topics. This, according to her, made a difference for broadening up the museums' public; indeed, according to the statistical analysis, McManus Galleries was the only museum in the city which had a wide representation of the local population. Outreach work at the McManus mostly focused during the period of the fieldwork in approaching groups of young people around the city to prepare their contribution for the *Flavour* exhibition, an exhibition of art works by some of the youth groups in Dundee. Young people participated in large numbers and the exhibition proved a great success for the museum; through the outreach programme, many of them had the chance to create their own works of art and use the museum educational resources in constructing their own perspectives of growing up in Dundee. During the three year closure of the museum (2005-2008), outreach work will be the core educational function of the McManus Galleries; it is anticipated that this will sustain the interest for the new museum and will encourage communities in the city to visit and explore the refurbished museum when it opens.

On the other hand, DCA and Dundee Heritage Trust offer a very limited outreach service. Apart from the educational programming for mainly children and young people onsite, outreach work is merely limited to marketing activities for ‘audience development’. The education officer from Discovery Point and Dundee Heritage Trust mentioned some outreach reminiscence workshops, however these were limited. Finally, according to the DCA Head of Education, outreach is not a part of their work, first due to their incapacity to respond to greater demand and second, because adult education is already served by other organisations in the city; the latter was the main reason for the limited educational offer for adults in general.

b. Educational opportunities in the exhibition space

In terms of learning at the museum and gallery space as part of a casual visit rather than in organised educational sessions, the three organisations apply very different interpretation tools. These range from offering minimal interpretation (McManus Galleries and DCA) to fairly comprehensive (Dundee Heritage Trust). The visitor at the McManus Galleries reads information in relation to the exhibits from panels on the walls; temporary exhibitions are often accompanied by an additional leaflet. DCA offers little interpretation in the gallery space; contemporary art works are usually left unexplained. However, adjacent to the galleries, an information room offers books, newspaper cuttings, previous exhibition catalogues, as well as a video with the exhibiting artists’ background. The space in the room is fairly narrow, with a capacity of four to five visitors at a time. Finally, gallery assistants in the exhibition space are there to assist visitors in making sense of the exhibition; nevertheless, few visitors —if not none— would ask for their help; research participants said they found it too embarrassing to ask questions.

As already discussed, McManus Galleries are planning to appoint the current museum front of house staff with the role of the ‘learning assistant’. At the DCA, gallery assistants are there to fulfil the role of attending the gallery but also help visitors orient themselves and understand the more cryptic meanings of abstract art. At the refurbished McManus, museum attendants will have the explicit role of assisting visitors to learn in the museum; visitors, in order to achieve the full potential of their visit, will now have the assistance and instructions of museum staff. It will

be interesting to examine how ‘learning assistants’ will be instructed to do this and how this will impact on the ways visitors experience the exhibitions at the McManus.

Dundee Heritage Trust’s interpretation differs considerably from the McManus Galleries and DCA. Of course, the ‘heritage industry’ nature of the organisation makes its approach to the exhibits very distinct from the ways art is interpreted (or not) in the gallery space. The history of RRS Discovery and the jute industry in Dundee are the stories that the city says about itself both to the local population and the city’s visitors. The interactive exhibits at Discovery are more than dominant in the museum space; often the multiplicity of noise and moving images from all directions create a sense of bewilderment that some of the research participants mentioned they found difficult to cope with. Further, they are mostly intended for children and many of the adult visitors seem reluctant to use them. Instead, there are numerous video screenings for them to watch; especially at the Discovery, visitors learn about the story of RRS—from the days of its construction at the ship yards of the city all the way to Antarctica and back—through a series of videos that slowly lead them to the visit of the ship itself, where volunteer guides show them around. Visitors, after having seen the ship, move to the last section of the museum, the shop.

Verdant Works applies very similar interpretation techniques but on a more limited scale. Indeed, the visitor numbers of the two sites are very different, with Discovery Point receiving far more visitors than Verdant Works⁴⁵. One could argue that Dundee Heritage Trust represents a good example of how the size of a museum’s collections and visitor numbers often determine the ways exhibitions and educational work are organised. In addition, even though the volunteer staff at Verdant do not have the assigned role of the learning assistant, their contribution in the interpretation of the displays and discussion with the visitors is very significant. Indeed, after visitors have watched *Juteopolis*, they gather in groups of no more than ten people and start the tour around the museum with the volunteers, most of whom are former jute workers. The tour is similar to those in other visitor attractions; however, volunteers welcome visitors’ comments or questions. Visitors, either from Dundee or from elsewhere, very often have connections with the jute industry of the city, either through their own family history or because of their interest in the social history of the area. Volunteers, through their narratives, often question the stories communicated from the museum displays; in general, dialogue in the museum space reveals the

⁴⁵According to the Scottish Museum Council’s National Audit (2002), Discovery Point receives approximately 70 thousand visitors per year, whereas Verdant Works only around 20.

multiple new possibilities for staff and visitors to share ideas on the construction of the city's past.

c. The discourse of participation: non-visitors, social inclusion and the social policy agenda

The analysis of the research findings offered a close examination of the groups who do not visit museums and their reasons for not doing so. These are multiple and mostly related to structural positionings; the latter was not only used as an explanation for barriers to visiting, but also as their reason for resistance against the 'inclusive' museum. Compared to previous research of participation in adult education in general (MacGivney, 1990; Munn and McDonald, 1988; Tett, 1993) and participation in museums in particular (Kirchberg, 1996), the findings were strikingly similar.

First, research participants most of the time had little or no knowledge of the organised educational opportunities available in the museum. This varied according to their social capital, that is, their levels of involvement in social activities in communities. Lack of time, constraints arising from family responsibilities and working patterns were cited mostly by women as impediments to visiting museums. Depending on their age, educational and social background, some women suggested that museums are irrelevant to their lives, while others claimed to like art and recreational activities of this kind. At the same time, many women saw museums as a way of extending their nurturing role in a more informal educational way. Women from the ethnic minorities in Dundee in particular, seemed to be substantially affected by cultural perceptions about the role of the woman in the family, a role which keeps them mostly at home and 'not venturing out to museums' (male participant from the Pakistani community). Nonetheless, institutional barriers, like the perceived upper- or upper-middle class character of the museum and the selective traditions of specific curricula, were the most common reasons for not choosing museums and galleries as places of leisure or learning.

Further, research participants, particularly those who do not visit museums frequently, often questioned the relevance of the museum to their lives and thought that museum visiting would be an inappropriate use of time. Assumptions connecting education to the young would keep a lot of participants away from museums, unless they visited with their children or grandchildren. In addition, many of those not visiting museums frequently, especially ethnic groups, said that

they felt they would be judged on their ability to understand and engage with the exhibitions. In general, with museum visiting not backed by strong social norms of their reference groups, learning in museums did not seem to hold as much significance as, for example, vocational training would. Museum visiting was regarded as having a cultural significance which they did not share; young people in particular seemed to be claiming the right to spend their free time their way, sharing with Baudrillard the idea of 'the drama of leisure, or the impossibility of wasting one's time' (1998).

Crowther's (2000) schema of the rules shaping the discourse of participation in adult education is useful here, in order to examine the ways it has—to an extent—been applied in the museum education in Dundee and further afield. According to him, 'the purpose adult education serves, and who benefits from it, are key questions to ask before a "premature ultimate" commitment to education as a universal good is made' (2000; 483). As with lifelong learning, participation in museum educational programmes and museums in general is undisputedly seen as a 'good' thing. No serious discussions, academic or professional, regarding the root-causes of non-participation or the real, long-term advantages (and disadvantages) of engaging the public with art and culture are to be found.

On the other hand, 'taking the moral high ground' (Crowther, 2000; 483) in relation to museum participation has negative implications for how non-visitors are seen. Non-participants were often seen by education officers in the museums investigated as people who either have no interest in culture and education, or—primarily—people who are so disadvantaged that would never have the opportunity to enjoy such a luxury. Nonetheless, the findings of this research showed that the reasons for non-participation are not always based on the *lack* of several attributes, like a cultivated and educated mind; instead, it was shown that it is precisely *plenty* of critical awareness and resistance that keeps some away from museums. The non-participation discourse does not recognise that 'exclusion' can be an active and informed process, rather than an absence because of inertia and lack of interest. This was to be confirmed by many of the participants in this research. Unwillingness to visit museums here might suggest an act of resistance against the dominant representations. As Patrick cleverly put it:

Perhaps rather than set out to attract the non-participant we should engage with the non-participant. Perhaps we, the educators, are the non-participants in the worlds of many of our fellow country men and women (Patrick cited in Crowther, 2000; 488).

3. Residual tendencies: the 'hidden' museum curricula of the 'modern' museum.

Each society has its regime of truth, its 'general politics' of truth: that is, the type of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctified; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; that status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true (Foucault, 1980; 131).

In contrast to the old museum, the 'post-museum' adopts the postmodernist critique of the grand narratives of the male, dead, white and Eurocentric approach to history and culture (Hooper-Greenhill, 1994). These were the selective traditions partially filtering knowledge (Williams, 1961) and constructing specific monopolies of truth of an era, which have no place in the 'new' museum. However, are there still some of these hegemonic traditions feeding the exhibition narratives of the museums in Dundee?

Dundee Heritage Trust, even though having adopted the marketing and exhibitionary techniques of the new era of the post-modern museum, presents historical narratives which very much accord with the nature of the organisation; as with other heritage sites, nostalgia and a tribute to the super(men)-heroes of a celebrated past dominate the exhibition space.

Juteopolis, the video screening at Verdant Works, is an interesting example of the 'hidden curricula' of the old museum world. In chapter five I analysed specific extracts of the video narrative, even though a great deal of its impact through the animated picture and sound is lost in the transcription. However, critically analysing the 'deconstructed' script casts light on many hidden 'texts' developing explicitly or implicitly in the video.

The video presents a romanticised version of the history of jute in Dundee. It does attempt to relate to a wide range of visitors, both locals and tourists, especially older Dundonians—who by far outnumber all other visitor age groups⁴⁶—and homesick migrants in countries like Australia or Canada, who often come back to their homeland for their holidays. Nevertheless, no matter

⁴⁶ Interview with the Dundee Heritage Trust education officer, 14.1.2005.

the visitor type, the point of departure for all is one—that of nostalgia. This is how an exhibition narrative can turn ‘a great industrial cul-de-sac, a grim monument to man’s (sic) inhumanity to man’ (Hugh MacDiarmid cited in Whatley et. al., 1993; 160) into a golden history, one that legitimizes the exploitation of thousands of workers. Nostalgia is a deliberate choice of mood, which dominates and defines the thematic structure of the script from the beginning to the very end. This ideological construct is used to support a specific profile of contemporary Dundee, that of an entrepreneurial centre.

The research participants’ views about Verdant Works and their refusal to accept the inevitability, sometimes even the memory itself, of the exploitation and misfortune, were an alternative narrative to the one communicated by *Juteopolis*. What was also interesting to find, is that criticisms of the exhibition narrative came from a diversity of participants, from young to old and from frequent visitors to those that had not visited the museum before. Even though Dundee Heritage Trust has applied marketing and new technologies extensively for reaching out to new cultural groups, the mainly nostalgic, but monolithic narrative remains ‘residual’, turned into a story of success and hence, exemplary for the present.

In conclusion, *Juteopolis* is a historical narrative of the modernist tradition, nonetheless using a popular audio-visual language which has done away with upper-class pretensions and elite vocabularies. Yet, in the era of the democracy of the open market, the representation of a historical past under the positive light of enterprise and progress, keeps away from pertinent questions about those who won and especially those who lost in this story. Ultimately, it could be argued that it legitimizes *contemporary* inequalities and relations of domination.

4. Emergent tendencies: ‘mis-recognitions’ and contradictions

Bourdieu’s concept of mis-recognition (1990) is at the heart of the contradictions of the museum paradox. While some mis-recognitions emerge from false beliefs, habitualised views and persistent frames of reference regarding museums and their visitors, others are fairly new and relate to new ideas about what the role of museums as educational institutions in the learning society could entail.

Bourdieu's theoretical framing of *méconnaissance* as the habitualised legitimisation of existing power relations as natural and hence undisputed, is a useful tool for the analysis of many of the non-regular visitors' ideas about museums. Indeed, the notion of habitus casts light on the reasons behind the acceptance of many of the interviewees that museums and galleries are not for people of the lower strata. Even though the research participants' subjective dispositions often differentiated their attitude towards museums and learning, there was disparity between the views of those who visit museums more often in comparison to those who do not. Participants often attributed their lack of interest to their schooling, family upbringing or work conditions, but the most usual and spontaneous response was that museum visiting is simply not for them. Especially with younger participants, their explanation for their non-participation was simple and straightforward: they are not 'inti any of that'.

Habermas's notion of the hermeneutics of suspicion offers a valuable tool for the analysis of a kind of 'meaning-making' that moves beyond personal 'interpretive repertoires' (Hooper-Greenhill, 1999) to connect one's experiences with the wider world. Indeed, interviewees often challenged the sanitised view of history offered by the museums of their city and subverted it by giving their own versions of it; for example, the glorified jute industry, as presented at Verdant Works, came in stark contrast with interviewees' descriptions about the realities of living and working in the 'Juteopolis'. Other participants connected art and culture, the 'toffee-nose' Dundee, with profit and exploitation and wished to distance themselves from it —because as one of them said, 'there's poverty everywhere' (Z, f, 57). Working-class people's stories and language, 'the rough end' (AK, m, 66), were seen as belonging to the pub rather than the museum. It would be interesting here to note that the Victorian museum attempted to divert people from pub and drink to culture and education; more than a hundred and fifty years later (the first Museums Act was signed in 1845), and after the emergence of the post-museum, participants still felt the need to explain why pubs as spaces of recreation might offer them a more social kind of learning.

In fact, the display of some interviewees' working-classness, like the strong accent, a more passionate and expressive way of argumentation, or their critique of pretensions, often became the signifiers of their difference from the museum. According to Bourdieu and Wacquant (1992),

apart from mis-recognising one's social position as natural rather than strategic⁴⁷, mis-recognition is also a mode of differentiation. Young people's attitude in particular might be of value here, since even their dress codes or physical movement in the gallery —the embodied habitus— became the primary reason for them feeling unwelcome. The devaluing of their particular cultural and social capital in the museum shows how spaces/ arenas often establish unequal rules for the exchange rate of the different forms of capital; being working-class, young or a woman, might suggest capitals that are not to be valued the same as others in the museum⁴⁸. Their frames of reference, through repetition and the conscious or unconscious embodiment of structurally defined ideas and habits, became the way with which they 'frame' their world; they did not seem to include museums in it.

In particular, all three forms of cultural capital (the embodied, the objectified and the institutionalised) influenced participants' views on the educational role of the museum. First of all, bodily traits acquired through early familiarisation with the world of art, such as a prescribed posture, keeping a distance from the art works, selective reading and pace of walk in the exhibition space often did not accord with some of the participants' more leisurely ways of moving around; laughing or speaking loudly were also dealt with contempt. However, disregard would often come from participants' peers or other visitors, rather than museum staff. The code for bodily conduct in the museum was sustained through the workings of relations of power and domination within the groups of the research participants/ visitors themselves. For example, women, when accompanied by their partners, often said little and did even less. Young Muslim women accompanied by their older mothers, would limit their comments to agreeing with their mothers' views. Some women participants said that, even though they do not enjoy museum visiting, they would visit with their husbands, whereas others were certain they would visit more were they less house- and work-bound. Young people would be peer conscious and did not want to differentiate themselves from their friends; the examples can go on.

Physical movement in the museum space is not only a matter of museum architecture and the surveillant eye of museum staff (Markus, 1993). Discipline and self-restraint are esoteric

⁴⁷ For example, giving students grades for their work is mis-recognised as reflecting effort and intelligence rather than their social position (Bourdieu, 1988). Hence, it 'allows the operation of a social classification while simultaneously masking it' (Bourdieu, 1988: 201).

⁴⁸ For similar findings in a longitudinal study of working class women's lives, see Skeggs (1996).

qualities, acquired through education and socialisation. Museums represent ideal spaces for the self-managing subject—and this has far more weight in contemporary society than it did in the past. For, in an era when the first public museums were the places where the old bourgeoisie would establish and differentiate itself from the lower social strata (Bennett, 1995), self-discipline, morality and the virtues of progress of the Western, white and male civilisation were didactically made explicit, particularly to those who lacked them. In contemporary museums, allegedly open and accessible to all, power relations, the different forms and degrees of ‘capitals’ as well as the disciplining of the subject, are all hidden under the equalising logic of the market ideology. Indeed, many of the participants in this research admitted they ‘know’ museums are changing. Nonetheless, the question remains: what is the direction of the change? Why do the ‘old’ patterns of social distinction persist? And where does the most serious ‘mis-recognition’ lie? In non-visitors habituses who keep on thinking their ways must surely still be the wrong ways, or in the construction of museums as democratic institutions, supposedly accessible to all?

In terms of the institutionalised cultural capital, i.e. qualifications and levels of education, participants were ready to connect museum visiting with formal education; younger people would compare it with school, and older participants would suggest that they have had a different kind of education, the ‘university of life’. They consistently implied or said outright that their kind of education and life experiences do not match with the museum ‘curricula’. The degree of their confidence for the value of their learning experiences in comparison with the institutionalised learning of the museum varied. However, most of the times they suggested that the museum ‘curriculum’ is of greater value than their everyday knowledges; ‘who am I to say?’ was often the response when asked to talk about their views on museums and learning.

Due to the background of the research participants (all of them were people involved in some kind of learning activity or other, as members of a group), there were many for whom Bourdieu’s *méconnaissance* went one step further; for Bourdieu, taste constitutes the distaste for the taste of the ‘Other’. In the case of many of the research participants, distaste for abstract art, for nostalgic museum memorabilia or for knitting or quilting sessions, were only some of the expressions of their dislike for museums. Participants, the more they were conscious of class differentiations and museums’ mis-recognitions of working-class culture and narratives, the more resistant and critical were they of museums. Astonishingly, the invisibility of their stories from the museum displays seemed to enlarge their vision with a different kind of an educational

experience altogether: their conscientisation (to use Freirean terminology) through disappointment and resistance against the dominant museum discourses.

Nonetheless, this is not an unambiguous picture; there were also numerous contradictions to be found. Museums' mis-recognition for alternative forms of wisdom rooted and experienced in everyday struggles, was not the only reason for the alienation of large segments of the Dundee and the wider population from museums and galleries. Most of the participants, even those who were critical of museums, seemed keen to learn about history, traditions and culture that they were familiar with from their school years. Civic pride was also evident, especially for those of an older age. For example, the contradictions regarding the McManus Galleries space were indicative: even though described as dark and 'stuffy', most of the visitors (and non-visitors) were sceptical about the new McManus re-development. Especially for those more frequent visitors, the old museum was a site of memory in itself; many of them would share their experiences of how the museum used to look like during their youth. In general, the stability of the 'old' world of the grand narratives, presented for example, in all its glory in both sites of the Dundee Heritage Trust, was often a historical variant that they seemed to know and were able to comprehend. In contrast, perplexity and a sense of contradictory interests was their reaction to what they sensed as a change in the contemporary museums and galleries in Dundee.

5. Education for adults in the museums in Dundee: an overview

In the attempt to sketch out an overview of the educational provision of the museums and galleries in Dundee, a multiplicity of educational approaches was found. Education depends on the size of the museum/ gallery, its collections, the history and traditions that have developed around the specific organisation and the current agenda and staff. For example, McManus Galleries, as the main local authority museum in Dundee, has a history of over 100 years; DCA and Dundee Heritage Trust count less than 10 years of presence in the city. Further, their organisation is different, with the DCA being the brain-child of a public-private partnership, whereas Dundee Heritage has a trust status which identifies it in the category of independent/ private museums.

The organisation and funding of each different institution has an impact on the educational activities they offer; even though education is part of the public mission of all of them, for some

it might sometimes become an additional source of income. However, what came out as an overall and persistent reality for all the museums and galleries investigated is the scarcity of funding for education. The education officer at the DCA, in particular, argued that demand is often high, however due to their limited resources in terms of funding and staff, the gallery often has to reduce the provision to what it can successfully organise. The McManus education officer stressed the need for partnerships across departments within the local council, or for the support of the Scottish Arts or Museum Council. Finally, the marketing officer at the Dundee Heritage Trust argued that what is seen as education and scholarship to curators, she can only see as business —otherwise both Discovery Point and Verdant Works would have to close.

These tendencies might explain the increasing association of education with marketing, to the extent that in the case of Dundee Heritage Trust it was only the investigation of both areas that could give a fuller picture of the provision. Dundee Contemporary Arts also presented a close relationship between the departments of education and marketing, whereas it was only the McManus Galleries which did not demonstrate such close connections between the two. In fact, the old McManus did not have a marketing department at all, quite a rare phenomenon for large contemporary museums and galleries. However, the changes the current re-development will bring are yet to emerge. Habermas's colonisation of the cultural lifeworld by market forces (1989) and Gramsci's ideas about the close connection of culture with the material reality, became useful theoretical tools in order to understand and analyse these developments.

To summarise, limited resources and the need to adjust to the ever-changing social, educational and funding agenda in order to sustain their work, are major factors determining the museums' educational opportunities in Dundee. In terms of pedagogy, the ideal visitor is usually constructed as the individual who will pursue independent and self-directed learning in the museum. His/ her experience has to be authentic, active and enjoyable; further, the more it fits in the learning outcomes prescribed by the museum/ gallery itself the better.

Informal learning is now defined, structured and measured. Little attention is given to the museum curricula, the content of the exhibitions and the authority of the voice behind them. Visitors are encouraged to 'learn how to learn' in the museum, a competency which gathers more and more weight in contemporary lifelong learning discourses. Museum learning is also about having an enjoyable experience; it aims at increasing participants' confidence levels, offer

them a constructive and creative session and please them by re-affirming their prior-knowledge and beliefs. The autonomy of the self-directed visitor has to be closely evaluated and reported, if museums are to secure their relevance and contribution to the knowledge society.

Indeed, all three museum education officers saw visitors as individuals with learning and leisure choices. On the other hand, they would treat non-visitors as belonging to social groups that needed to be approached and 'empowered' in order to (ideally) become, as the rest, independent visitors. Based on cultural diversity or the politics of identity, a major part of the Dundee constituencies, the one perceived as in need of inclusion, is divided into ethnic minorities, people with disabilities, gays and lesbians, people of colour etc. The structures pervading these groups and relations of power cutting across them are left untouched. Complex realities, like context and the different degrees and forms of cultural and social capital that determine visitors' attitude towards museums and education in general, are waning in the face of the celebration of the instant, the personal and experiential. However, research participants spoke about the social dimension of learning towards collective and shared experience and action; this kind of learning for dissent is left unacknowledged and hence undesired.

Gramsci has argued in relation to the ways hegemony and power work covertly in attributing some social groups with a subordinate status. He shows the way disadvantaged groups themselves inculcate hegemonic discourses that take social position as a given and hence justify inequality. As discussed, many of the interviewees would claim that their opinion is of little value and their stories not grand enough to be part of the museum narratives; some would blame themselves for not understanding exhibitions. On the other hand, the visitors who are not seen as disadvantaged, are increasingly viewed as individuals with a diversity of private needs and preferences, rather than seen as social beings, members of communities where they possess different levels of power and authority.

Nevertheless, the locatedness of the museum educational provision within the context of a relatively small urban centre like Dundee, gave evidence of the possibilities that the post-modern museum has also opened up for alternative and oppositional readings of the dominant trends. The narratives of the ex-jute workers at Verdant Works, or the outreach provision of the McManus Galleries are only few of the examples of work of this kind in Dundee. I will come back to this in the following chapter.

From the residual pedagogies of a glorified past, to the dominant need for adaptability to an ever-changing present, and finally to the emergent resisting voices of some museum visitors and educators, museums are indeed contested spaces, only the reflection of far wider and complex webs of power relations in society. Slowly discarding the divine rituals prescribed from some unknown, mysterious curatorial powers (Duncan, 1995), museums have adopted much more people-focused policies, which see individuals, rather than objects, as central to the museums' mission. Gramsci's work has been vital in showing the hegemonic pre-eminence of the individualisation of museum learning, and Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) were useful for analysing the ways education in museums, like elsewhere, has more of a 'class-confirming' (Steele and Taylor, 2004), rather than liberating role. Using the Habermasian idea of the colonisation of the lifeworld by technocratic logic (1984), I showed how the 'calculative rationality' of prescribing specific outcomes for education and closely reporting on them, might arguably be a limited and limiting way of thinking about education in museums; the oppositional voices of many research participants were to confirm this.

Undeniably, museums and galleries across the UK —Dundee included— have been experiencing waves of change. Change, however, is not a mono-dimensional process; it involves a multiplicity of perspectives, trends and contradictions, some of which I attempted to analyse in this chapter. In the final one, after having drawn on the main conclusions of the study, I am going to argue for an alternative kind of education in museums which, by grounding itself in the contemporary paradoxes museums currently experience, can find *in* the museum the potential to fight *against* its dominant tendencies.

‘In and against the museum’: conclusions and reflections

This study pursued two main strands of research inquiry. First, it examined the educational opportunities in the museums and galleries in Dundee, the values underlying them and the curricula that determine the pedagogical practices employed. Second, it was an attempt to investigate the impact of this provision and the reactions of the local population to it. In other words, it sought to understand what and how people learn in the museum and the factors that influence their educational experiences. Through investigating visitors’ views on the educational role of the museums and galleries in Dundee, the study was led to challenge dominant policies and practices around learning and participation in the museum and explore alternative possibilities. In a city where museums and galleries invest far more in children’s learning rather than adults’, the levels of interest, engagement and ideas that research participants presented in regard to the city’s museums may come as a positive surprise for staff and policy makers.

The evidence shows that Dundee museums have attempted to address many of the issues that for a long time had been areas of criticism and causes of alienation of the public from museums (the emphasis on education in the McManus, for example). They increasingly try to connect exhibitions to people’s demands and preferences, while stressing their relevance to community and personal development (eg. the role of Dundee Heritage Trust). These new ideas, together with the new economic reality of the post-industrial era for the city, became the stimuli for opening new galleries and museums (eg. DCA) and furthering the offer of the established ones (eg. outreach provision by the McManus Galleries).

However, despite local particularities, museum and gallery education in Dundee largely corresponds to the broader national and international developments in the museum sector. A new vocabulary has marked the recent history of the museums in the city, during which they have been increasingly expected to marry commercial approaches with education, contribute to social inclusion, and preserve important aspects of the past. Bourdieu’s notion of the field (1993) is particularly useful in identifying the contested spaces of museum education for adults; a dynamic assemblage of diverse forces occupy it, forces that can—even within a single institution—be residual, dominant and emergent. Verdant Works is a case in point; residual historical narratives, although presented with the aid of the most dominant

contemporary museum pedagogic tools, are being resisted by emergent oppositional voices, such as those of the research participants.

Dundee Contemporary Arts reflects these contesting forces, too. It has renounced the old world of museums and galleries by its very name and established an open space, offering multiple leisure/learning experiences for all. However, its visitors are mainly people with high economic capital and education. DCA's educational provision is largely addressed to young people, a group traditionally given high priority in policy aimed at cultivating confident and skilled young individuals. Given the relatively small size of the city and its working class demographics, DCA represents for the Dundee students' population, business community and up-town intelligentsia one of the few spaces in the city, where they can feel part of the new, regenerated Dundee.

On the other hand, the old McManus Galleries and Museum is being currently refurbished towards becoming the ideal 'post-museum', 'a functional, glamorous star attraction second to none' (McManus, online, 2006), where lifelong learning, shopping and eating will be offered to wider 'audiences'. Even though it was the museum with the broadest representation of the local population compared to the other sites, the city councillors aim for the new museum to have a changed image and give new educational opportunities for its visitors.

Finally, Dundee Heritage Trust is an independent/ private organisation operating as visitor attraction, both keeper of Dundee's historical past and tourist magnet for the city's growing tourism industry; admission fees and marketing through renting premises for conferences, weddings and other social events are a reality for the Trust. Such a 'mix-and-match' leisure/culture/learning experience reflects the dominant discourse around the self-directed visitor/learner, empowered to customise their visit/learning in any way they like.

Such pragmatic approaches indeed matter for the survival of museums in the competitive market of the cultural and leisure industries. Nevertheless, what is the role of the museum as an educational institution in this new context? Should compliance with the economic and social policy agendas be as prevalent as it appears to be? How are dominant trends translated in the local context and what is the degree of convergence of national policies in museum education with the local, practical, everyday educational practice in the museums under investigation? This study showed the democratizing potential of the post-modern museum to

address and engage with the citizenry in ways that museums and people, at least in Dundee, had not seen before. However, many of the new policies have had unintended outcomes which, rather than reject, often re-invent the old hierarchies of taste and distinction in the museum. I would argue that the post-modern museum has created the unique opportunity to now find *within* the museum walls the educational tools to fight *against* the institutionalised legitimacy of these hierarchies.

Indeed, even though government policies drive Dundee museums in certain directions, there is substantial evidence of resistance, stemming from both museum professionals and visitors. This study showed the dialectical nature of the engagement with the policy discourse for many museum staff. As Williams also argued in relation to the emergent and alternative possibilities (1973), both curators and museum educators often interpret broader developments and trends in ways which contradict the assumptions and values informing them. In addition, there are always contextual conditions and organisational realities that determine the ways policy is translated and applied. Although Dundee museums might often appear to be adapting their work to the numerous 'toolkits' of 'best practice' prescribed from above, the degree of the *real* inculcation of these new discourses is to be doubted.

Through the analysis of the main research findings in the previous chapter, I attempted to show the ways in which the increased interest in the educational potential of museums and galleries corresponds to the post-modern emphasis on subjectivity, relativism and cultural difference, as well as social inclusion and the lifelong (and life-wide) learning agendas. Here, I am going to step back, as it were, and attempt to give some answers to the questions this study set for itself. In other words, what is the educational role of the museums and galleries in Dundee? What values guide it? How do adults perceive this role and what are their views on alternative possibilities? Ultimately, what are the main issues that have arisen from the interaction between museums and the public in a specific locality and in relation to their adult educational function? Further, new questions and perspectives were generated in the course of this work, and I shall discuss the ways in which they provide the focus for further research that could build on the basis of the findings of this study.

a. Individuals, the market and the post-museum

Reflecting the more general tendencies of the post-modern museum, museums and galleries in Dundee were seen as offering better access, generated mainly through participation in learning as a pleasurable activity. Through the museums' learning offer, individuals and groups are encouraged to pursue their own meanings, or in other words, what Edwards called, *heterogeneous* goals (Edwards, 1995; 187); that is, visitors have a kind of learning that is more personal than collective. Instead of being passive in their reception of the museum message, visitors are supported in actively seeking their own individual interpretations of the meanings of artworks and artefacts.

Indeed, these efforts have borne their fruits. Museums and galleries in the city have become more popular than before. They offer an enjoyable experience to their visitors, far from the passive and unexciting visits of the past. All visitors are welcome; indeed, those that are less likely to visit (provided they are supervised), are even more. Visitors are encouraged to lead their visit independently, learn, enjoy themselves and, if possible, repeat their visit soon. Individual agency is celebrated in all Dundee museums, where all visitors, both traditional and non-traditional, interpret exhibitions according to their own personal frames of reference.

Gramsci's theory of hegemony is of value in understanding the ways post-modernist thought has served this discourse of valuing personal agency and individual traits and dispositions in the 'post-museum'. The pre-occupation with museum visitors as the independent seekers and consumers of their own meaning-making pursuits, relates closely to the hegemonic predominance of the management of the self through exercise, learning, shopping, travel and, as we have seen, culture. As Habermas has argued, the over-emphasis on the market over other areas of public life has contributed in often dealing with visitors as consumers, who have different needs and desires in the museum. The increased interest in quality assurance and evaluation of education in museums results in examining visitors as individual entities with needs and objectives, rather than people who belong in a diversity of communities and social groupings.

However, whilst museums present themselves as accessible and open for every individual, they treat visitors as undifferentiated in terms of their cultural and social capitals; offering equal opportunities to visit a museum or gallery treats people as if they start their visits on an

equal plane. Arguably, in the museum quasi-markets⁴⁹ where individualism and personal choice are the new rules of the 'game of art' (Bourdieu and Darbel, 1991), what are the benefits of trying to attract those that find it hard to play? As Griffin argues for lifelong learning, museum and gallery education is ideally placed to deliver what in every society is the precondition and cornerstone of sustaining power and wealth: social cohesion.

Lifelong learning...[is]...the only alternative to a social welfare provision which can no longer be afforded and which, in any case, many believed to have failed. However, lifelong learning continues to be strategically positioned in relation to traditional welfare state concerns: the development of human capital, the need for social inclusion and common cultures or social consensus (Griffin, 1999b; 447).

The short history of lifelong learning in the UK and abroad has shown that it redefines 'citizens as consumers in the market place rather than political actors in the public arena' (Crowther, 2004). Indeed, not only in the museum sector, but almost in every area of public life, services are based on a 'value for money' approach, performance and customer satisfaction —of course, markets are not neutral spaces with unlimited resources.

The market is formally neutral but substantively interested. Individuals (or institutions) come together in competitive exchange to acquire possession of scarce goods and services. Within the marketplace all are free and equal, only differentiated by the capacity to calculate their self-interest. Yet, of course the market masks its social bias. It elides but also reproduces the inequalities which consumers bring to the marketplace. Under the guise of neutrality, the institution of the market actively confirms and reproduces the pre-existing social order or wealth, privilege and prejudice (Ranson, 1992; 72).

We need to think about the implications of the close proximity of education with marketing in museums in Dundee and further afield. Marketing is not a neutral tool, used only to promote museum work. It has implications for the kinds of knowledge and education that are offered in the museum. For is education a light way of spending one's time creatively or can it potentially be the practice of freedom (Freire, 1976) that problematizes and challenges visitors' pre-conceptions and museums' traditions? Even though the government modernising agenda has improved museum spaces and services in accordance with contemporary standards of good practice, it has also set museums under the all-encompassing horizon of the market economy, where values are usually measured against costs. In this discourse, education is divided into 'hard' qualifications and 'soft' general

⁴⁹ The notion of quasi-markets, according to Griffin (1999b) are those administered markets, which, even though not privately owned, compete for customers. 'It represents the government's strategic role in ensuring the transition from a command to a market economy, and from a welfare state to a neo-liberal order' (Griffin, 1999b; 442).

competencies intended for flexible workers. Museum educators are asked to be merely facilitators of the learning 'process'; their educational role is in fact reduced, whereas managerial responsibilities, such as monitoring and evaluation, become more significant (see also Grek, 2003). Is it any wonder that often they become cynical about the over-emphasis on learning and the exploitation of education as the remedy of all museum and certain social issues as well? This situation cramps the autonomy of museum educators.

It would be naïve and unhelpful not to acknowledge the difficulties of following any other route, apart from the commercial one, or to argue that marketing initiatives are all negative for education in museums. This research showed how marketing techniques have assisted museum education departments in attracting a diversity of groups to museums, groups that often had no contact with museums and galleries before. In addition, in the era of speedy telecommunications and virtual realities, marketing has indeed opened the museum doors to far more people than ever before.

But techniques are different from principles and values. The increasing demands for evaluation have resulted in the prevalence of a language of numbers and outcomes over issues of educational concern. Little is left from a kind of education that discusses ethics, history, philosophy or aesthetics in the museum; even less is truly about concerns around social issues, social struggles and political matters. I am not suggesting that this was the dominant mode of museum education in the past, of course. However, with the rise of the post-modern museum, when people rather than objects have become the central focus of museums' mission, I would argue that 'delivering' education as a matter of counting numbers and applying techniques risks missing out on the great educational potential of museums. This study has given numerous examples of the ways old narratives and hierarchies have already been translated into accessible, hands-on displays. Nevertheless, the point in question is: should education be about more?

For many museum educators there is a political necessity to work *in* and *against* the institutions that employ them. Working *in* the museum would entail using historical and cultural artefacts in order to fight *against* the hierarchies and limitations of the 'selective tradition' (Williams, 1973) of past historical residues or the contemporary reconstitution of the visitor into customer. However, as with visitors, structural constraints are to be acknowledged for museum educational work as well. Nonetheless, this negotiation should also recognise the significance of the distinction between costs and values. In other words,

what is the museum educators' political understanding of the bigger picture of the new world of lifelong learning and the market economy? What is the difference of using the realities of their professional and personal experience to enlarge visitors' vision of the world, from simply using the right language to receive the funding for the furthering of institutional benefits (see also Thompson, 2001)?

b. Learning, accessibility and the post-museum

Museums and galleries in Dundee promote a type of learning that is individual and enjoyable. Access is reduced to fairly structured and conventional educational programmes, rather than those that challenge the hierarchies of knowledge and power the post-modern museum set out to dismantle.

Such an approach doesn't deal with issues of culture and power which underpin institutional practices, is in danger of constructing non-participation as cultural deficit, and achieves outcomes which at best amount to a 'second-skimming' process (Johnston, 1999; 180).

As this research has shown, the idea of learning as an individual enterprise is not what research participants appear to want. A 'customer-oriented' form of education disheartens and excludes those for whom the sharing of common problems and values is their perception of what education is for. At least in regard to the social dimensions of learning in the museum, most of the participants, but museum workers too, said that it is the most valuable part of the visit. Should it come as a surprise that working-class people find museums and galleries irrelevant to their everyday lives and experiences?

I would argue that there is a shift from the old museum, the architecture of which exposed the individual to the gaze of power (Foucault, 1977) to the new, open museum, which offers diverse 'learning' choices to the active visitor/ learner. Hence, museum learning needs to be 'fun', active rather than passive, related to curiosity and creating opportunities for new learning. Information and communication technologies are a vital ingredient of this new museum, since they are the basis of the flexible and need-orientated learning facilities—hence the emphasis on ICT in Dundee Heritage Trust or the refurbished McManus.

It could be argued that the practice of learning, or learning how to learn, is one of the most significant aspects of education. However, the emphasis on *processes* rather than *purposes* suggests a reduction of education to a mere matter of means rather than ends. Indeed, it

seems that as with other educational institutions preparing lifelong learners/workers, flexibility and self-directedness in the museum is of crucial significance:

Knowledge has been replaced by skills and learning. Everything which might have been seen as obtaining knowledge...seems to have moved into an activity mode, where what is important is process (Marshall, 1996: 269).

If the connection of learning in museums with the requirements for a flexible workforce seems like an argument too far, I would suggest that it is *precisely* the notion of flexibility that makes them closely relevant: the discourse about the independent visitor in charge of their visit and learning in the museum is strikingly similar to the hegemonic discourse of the flexible worker, managing their learning portfolio and career prospects. Individuals in the museum are encouraged to play a crucial part in the generation of knowledge for themselves. This is a 'skill for life', one of the many in the framework of general competencies necessary to 'succeed'. In turn, museum staff need to process all learning that can be made visible and tactically externalised; it is only the learning that is communicable that can be turned into an advantage (Tuschling and Engemann, 2006).

Preston argues against the over-recognition of outcomes as a proof of learning, and supports that 'this potentially de-authorises the learning of some. Their learning is of use only in that it can deliver benefits and is not necessarily of intrinsic value' (Preston, 2006; 167). Even though learning in the museum is for most (though not all) informal and leisure learning, the pre-occupation with planning, structuring and measuring it, reflects the hegemonic trend towards the institutionalisation of every aspect of *potential* learning people might have. The emphasis on finding the language and structures to offer a more organised 'learning experience' in the museum might therefore mean that the institutional boundaries of the museum, as a reflection of the ever-dominant hegemonic educational frameworks, 'are being redrawn rather than withdrawn' (Crowther, 2000; 485).

The claim of 'accessibility' of the new post-modern museum, both in Dundee and further afield, is in itself the effect of a new state of affairs, where entrance to the museum is not only allowed but assisted. Nonetheless, as this research has shown, the 'rules of the game' of art and culture have not substantially changed. In other words, the rules of playing the game of art in museums have become less strict than before, nonetheless they are still set by the favourite players. The notion of accessibility of certain venues for disadvantaged groups renders these groups deficient of certain features other groups have; instead of radically changing and democratising the stories museums tell, 'non-visitors' are expected to make

their own interpretations of histories that mean little to them and interest them even less. This is how boundaries, hierarchies and their reproduction are re-configured.

Such a reduced notion of education in the museum does little to change the widespread public opinion about the kinds of knowledge and interests museums represent. The lifelong learning discourse, as the driving force behind the new post-modern museum, is the reflection and the consequence of 'the reform of the welfare, and the retreat of policy making to strategic role....which both reflect the essentially *political* nature of the process, and the *reality* of it' (Griffin, 1999b; 442, emphasis in original). Even though attributed to the inevitability of technological and global changes museums are part of, museum learning, like lifelong learning in general, paradoxically finds its solutions in the choices, needs and learning styles of individuals. Learning is not only the product of the museum experience; instead, learning *and* experience form a unique dynamic, where novelty, enjoyment and change can always produce new learning and new experience (Usher, Bryant and Johnston, 1997). It seems that in the new 'learning society', flexibility is the answer to the paradox of the benefits of being paradoxical:

Organisations with paradoxes will be, if they are dealt with appropriately, more effective and successful than those without. Thus, mastering contradictions is what is needed in today's management for museums. Museums need to know best how to foster, deploy and marshall people's creativity to make most of their organisational capacity and work for the benefit of society. This must be done, while they deliver services on time, keep to tight budgets, and meet regulations and statutory requirements' (Kawashima quoted in Lawley, 2003; 84).

c. Cultural diversity, visitor needs and the post-museum

The majority of the Dundee museums showed recognition of plurality in the place of universal canons. Indeed, post-modern theory has suggested a valuable corrective to binary and dialectical oppositions traditionally held in museums. It has also brought cultural differentiation to the fore, by using relativism and cultural diversity as explanatory tools, in order that museums attempt to present a view of the world as constructed by a multiplicity of meanings, cultures and ways of seeing.

Work such as Young's is useful here (2000). She suggests the need to conceptualise groups according to a relational rather than substantialist logic. This means that, instead of examining the specific characteristics of social groups, their claims and rights to justice as separate and different from each other, a relational analysis, one that would see social groups

as forces that operate *in relation to one another* in society, could offer a much more productive and deeper understanding of their structures. Indeed, if museums are to bring people together in a sharing of ideas and cultures, what is the logic behind the post-modernist emphasis on cultural difference that divides them with rigid and impenetrable distinctions? Further, in what ways would a more relational view of social groupings assist us in explaining the multiple disadvantages and positions of domination that —especially excluded— people are placed within? Young offers an insightful metaphor:

The cage makes the bird entirely unfree to fly. If one studies the causes of this imprisonment by looking at one wire at a time, however, it appears puzzling. How does a wire only a couple of centimetres wide prevent a bird's flight? One wire at a time, we can neither describe nor explain the inhibition of the bird's flight. Only a large number of wires arranged in a specific way and connected to one another to enclose the bird and reinforce one another's rigidity can explain why the bird is unable to fly freely (Young, 2000; 92).

Instead of an education that opens up public debate on social, political and moral questions, a preferences and lifestyles discourse has been introduced to museum education. According to this, museums have become more democratic on the basis of addressing people's individual needs. It was following this logic that the educational officer at the DCA suggested that visiting the arts centre is a matter of personal choice. The inequality of the structural conditions under which such 'choices' are made is an issue already discussed.

However, even if some do start from a position of disadvantage, is it not the case that an open and democratic museum should follow the preferences of the majority? Young deals persuasively with this argument by offering an interesting analysis of two models of democracy. The first is the aggregative model, whereas the second the deliberative one:

[The aggregative model] interprets democracy as a process of aggregating the preferences of citizens in choosing public officials and policies. The goal of democratic decision making is to decide what leaders, rules and policies will best correspond to the most widely and strongly held preferences. Assuming the process of competition, strategising, coalition-building and responding to pressure is open and fair, the outcome of both elections and legislative decisions reflects the aggregation of the strongest or most widely held preferences in the population (2000; 19).

Through the process of public discussion with a plurality of differently opinioned and situated others, people often gain new information, learn of different experiences of their collective problems, or find that their own initial opinions are founded on prejudice and ignorance, or that they have misunderstood the relation of their own interests to others (2000; 26).

According to Young, in the aggregative model of democracy, individuals' needs and preferences are taken as a given, whatever the motivations behind them happen to be. They could be based on faith or fear, motivated by self-interest or humanism. Citizens do not have to — in the post-modern museum they are actually *encouraged* not to— leave the private sphere of their interests and wants, in order to democratically discuss with others, whose preferences and cultures might differ. The aggregative model of democracy does not contribute to the social dimensions of human life, through which women and men strive to reach shared understandings and the common good. In contrast, this model responds to the laws of the market, where the survival of the fittest still remains the oldest (jungle) law of all.

Indeed, strong elements of deliberative democratic praxis were to be found in the contributions of many of the research participants in this study. Some argued strongly in favour of a social mode of learning, which brings them in contact with other people and cultures in the museum. Research participants discussed the merits of visiting museums and galleries together with family and friends; they stressed the need for the inclusion of ordinary peoples' stories in the museums and the collaborative mounting of exhibitions with diverse communities. Most of them talked about the significance of human interaction and dialogue in the galleries, rather than the use of technology and interactive exhibits. They often used the notion of class to elaborate on their ideas about education in the museum and explain their dislike for some displays. They were keen on discussing exhibitions in a critical frame of mind, unwilling to accept the legitimacy of power and discrimination against cultures and histories that might have been ordinary, but which, they felt, were uniquely theirs.

Similarly, museum educators in all three organisations appeared to sometimes be translating the increased emphasis on learning in the museum, into their own different ways of responding to the local and institutional perceptions. This study showed a multiplicity of ways that museums and galleries in Dundee have turned the new dominant learning discourses into meaningful educational opportunities for the people of the city. These instances of real engagement of the public with exhibitions were characterised by both museum staff and visitors as the sort of educational opportunity that has been fostered by working *in* and *against* the dominant versions of museum education theory and practice. Their practices bear great similarity to Young's deliberative model of democracy, as discussed above.

Nonetheless, how does the 'in and against' argument of the 1970s fit into the new world of globalisation and the changed nature of the state and public sector organisations? Workers in a diversity of institutions, from the health sector to universities and from local government to the media, find it increasingly hard to secure their professional autonomy and use their positions in order to 'de-authorize' the authority of the institutions that employ them. The audit culture (Strathern, 2000) and the politics of numbers (Rose, 1999) might have improved transparency and performance, but have diminished the professional freedom to subvert hegemonic trends.

Why would museums and galleries be any different? This study showed how, depending on the museum, its collections and, of course, the commitment of its workers, one could combine the creative and often subversive power of arts, culture and adult education in order to create room for alternative possibilities. Yet, it could be argued that, as with the old liberal adult education offered in universities, colleges or the Workers' Educational Association (WEA), there is a contradiction in the history of the collaboration between adult learners and adult learning providers: apart from enlightenment, its narrative is also one of *containment* (Steele and Taylor, 2004). Nonetheless, I would argue that in the case of museums and galleries, 'containing' could also mean *nurturing*. The findings of this study can become the springboard for re-establishing the dialogue between radical adult education and museums that slowly died away during the 1970s. It would entail the exploration of meanings and narratives behind artefacts and artworks to question established truths and dominant histories. Some of the research methods used in this study had elements of a critical approach to museum education and bore interesting fruits towards this direction.

In general, the study's findings revealed the need for further research, which might attempt to conceptualise and test some of these alternative, often oppositional, ideas about museum education for adults in practice. The next and final section examines issues and questions the present research generated and future research could examine more closely.

d. Looking back and looking ahead: reclaiming education

This study would not have been realized, had it not been for the access movement (Johnston, 1999) which has affected museums in the UK and abroad, along with other cultural and educational organizations. It is within this relatively new area of museum education for adults and its contradictions that this research searched for the resources that could challenge

some of the dominant tendencies towards an alternative pedagogy for adults in museums. The findings of this study, and especially the interviewees' contributions, which offer an array of suggestions for more meaningful —to them— participation, have become the basis for thinking 'in and against' the museum; their stories, humour, critical astuteness and political sensibility, even though not easily translated into written text, have guided the analysis.

Therefore, instead of following a line of disillusionment, I believe in the importance of standing *for* something, as opposed to —the unhelpful and unproductive— fighting *against* everything. In any case, history itself has shown that, despite financial constraints and competing demands, museum education in the UK has flourished, bearing the fruits of the persistent efforts and passionate work of a growing number of old and young museum educators, men and women —and increasingly people of all colours and cultures⁵⁰. Since the 1990s, Dundee in particular, has seen the opening of three new museums and galleries (Verdant Works, Discovery Point and Dundee Contemporary Arts), while McManus Galleries is under re-development; surely, this cannot but be a positive step towards the engagement of the people of Dundee with their city's culture and history.

Williams' work (1973) was useful in order to explore the voice of the participants in the field, people who themselves have specific social positions and ideological beliefs. I have already discussed the locatedness of this study at length and admitted to a kind of partiality and subjectivity that social science does not and cannot avoid. The very acts of asking questions and making selections —the work of the social scientist and, I would argue, the educator as well— do not accord with claims for disinterested objectivity, even if it were possible. According to Williams's idea about the 'selective tradition' (1973), 'the selectivity is the point; the way in which from a whole possible area of past and present, certain meanings and practices are chosen for emphasis, certain other meanings and practices are neglected and excluded' (1973; 9).

The significance not only of Williams's theory but also of the Gramscian, the Bourdieusian and the Habermasian propositions, have been central to this study; starting from the beginning, in the review of literature on education in museums, I showed how hegemonic discourses around certain museum pedagogies have been more prevalent, if not having

⁵⁰ 'Diversify!' is the name of the new project of the Museums Association in the UK, which encourages and rewards museums that promote greater staff diversity through their human resource departments (Museums Association, online, 2007).

totally monopolized the thinking around museum education. I explored the selective traditions not only of those more 'traditional' narratives, like the one adopted by Dundee Heritage Trust, but also the selectivity of the discourses influencing the educational policies and practice of the DCA and the McManus Galleries. I showed how old frames of distinction and the reproduction of the capitals necessary to engage with museums, are not always crossed, but, more often than not, re-drawn under the veil of giving equally open access and free choice to unequal people. I also discussed the ways a functionalist and technocratic view on learning has colonised educational work in museums. Of course, claims for value neutrality are false and would obscure the selections museums, one way or another, have to make; no exhibition narrative and no educational programme could ever cover every possible meaning, interpretation or version of history. Hence, using the research participants' views on Williams's 'certain other meanings and practices' (1973; 9) which museums have neglected, I would like to highlight some of the pathways this research has opened up for a potentially more democratic way forward for museum education.

What do we understand by democracy in the museum? Is recognition and participation what the new inclusive museum should all be about? Or can museums take people a step further, offering them the kind of education that might actually make a difference in their lives? How can this be translated in the everyday educational offer in the museum?

In chapter three I discussed Wenger's schema of engagement-imagination-alignment (1998; 2000) as a point of departure for a radical museum education. As already discussed, through the present offer of the museums and galleries in Dundee, arts and crafts sessions are mostly focused on developing *individual* characteristics, such as confidence and creativity. When educational programmes are organised using a multiplicity of media and ways of expression (drama, art and crafts, music, song or other), the museum educator can assist visitors identify *common* concerns and experiences. Such a mutual engagement in shared activities gradually accumulates shared or divergent histories. Interlinked trajectories shape people's identities in relation to one another. Through the work of imagination, visitors are able to see themselves in new ways. Museums can foster imagination through the display of historical developments, events and transitions; visitors could be asked to reinterpret histories and trajectories in an effort to examine the present as one of many possibilities, with the future holding the same—if not larger—number of possibilities.

Engagement, imagination and alignment might still seem abstract ideas to those with a more practical viewpoint on visitors' interactions with the displays and amongst themselves; indeed, fieldwork showed how discussion with participants revealed their educational experiences to be far more complex and blurred than Wenger's framework suggests. Most interviewees acknowledged the significance of improving their engagement with and understanding of museum displays in their city. However, it was in the moments of imagination and alignment of participants' own narratives with those of others that many of them suggested that the educational role of the museum lies. A social and dialogic learning in the museum was suggested, one which connects participants' own personal histories and learning experiences with those of other visitors'. But how can it be achieved?

In the review of the theoretical framework of this study, I discussed the usefulness of Arendt's emphasis on the ideas of opinion and storytelling. I explained the significance that Arendt places in opinion; it is the very essence of politics. Indeed, research participants did not refuse the possibilities that the post-modern museum has given them to form their own interpretations of the exhibits. What they strongly argued, however, was in favour of sharing their views with others and actively changing museums on the basis of their collaborative understandings; of making their opinions matter.

I would argue that this could become a point of departure for alternative, more democratic ways of thinking about museum education for adults. Arendt's relatively abstract notion of finding one's place in the world can be reconstructed as finding literally or figuratively one's place or opinion in the more concrete space of the museum. Indeed, museums, through the multiplicity of cultures and ways of being, historical periods and contemporary issues they display, can become the hubs of democratic deliberation and dialogic interaction. This study revealed a variety of ways exhibition spaces across Dundee can foster contact and dialogue amongst different social and cultural communities in the city. Above all, museums and galleries' presentation of expressive arts and material culture offers an additional advantage for the participation of those who do not find the more traditional and rational forms of argumentation useful, in order to claim their demands and share opinions.

Indeed, museums could adopt Young's more 'agonistic' model of democratic process (2000; 49), through which alternative forms of expression could transform museums into platforms of the voice of those traditionally excluded and under-represented. Regarding the museums in Dundee, one of the research participants (P, m, 68), a former trade unionist, explained how

premises at the McManus Galleries used to be offered for trade union and other groups' meetings; hence, the main city museum was perceived as one of the public fora where citizens had the opportunity to meet and discuss. This, however, has long ceased to happen. Citizens' groups now have to rent —the often unaffordable— conference suites. As a consequence, McManus Galleries have irretrievably lost this aspect of their offer to the local public.

Museums, due to the diversity of people and cultures they bring together and the exhibitionary styles they apply, could offer people in disadvantage the space for forming and publicly expressing their opinion. They could open for them a place in the world where their opinions are made public, as Arendt suggests. This would become possible by allowing people to express their views in their own ways, let it be through speech, song, drama and dance. Arendt's notion of 'storytelling' (Benhabib, 1996) or Young's 'political narrative' (2000) could become examples of educational tools that would encourage participants to tell stories from their own experiences that would actually engage, imagine and align them (Wenger, 1998; 2000) with the perspectives of others; of course, sharing stories does not have to result in unanimous agreement. Instead, it is in the process of conversing with others, self-representing and articulating oneself in public that a civic imagination can be cultivated and sustained:

The process of articulating good reasons in public forces one to think from the standpoint of all others to whom one is trying to tell one's own story. The ability of individuals and groups to take the standpoint of others into account, to reverse perspectives and see the world from their point of view is a crucial virtue in a civic polity, certainly one that becomes most necessary and most fragile under conditions of cultural diversity and social opacity (Benhabib, 1996; 210).

A pre-condition of democratic deliberation is the autonomy of the self. According to Bauman, 'the realm of autonomy begins where the realm of certainty ends' (1999; 79). He stresses that being 'autonomous *für sich*' involves being able to grasp society's historicity and understand the on-going nature of expanding one's freedom, through constant critique and reform, rather than accept a pre-determined pattern of happiness and fulfilment, decided *de facto* from above. Instead of an aggregative model of democracy in which the tendency is to theorize agents as solitary subjects rather than collective entities, Bauman stresses the need to synthesize opinions and actions, as part of a *collective* rather than individual project. Apart from forming an opinion and finding the place to express it, Bauman argues the need to associate; according to him, the triad of freedoms —speech, expression and association— are the *sine qua non* of a liberated mind.

Bauman, on the one hand, 'in search of politics' (1999) and Martin (2001), on the other, in search of the adult education tradition, both stress the need to re-constitute the *agora*, the interface of the private and the public sphere, a site of dialogue and collaboration, but also of tension and struggle. I would argue that museums are well-placed for creating such an agora, following the ancient Greek city-states' formula, where citizens were invited to discuss and deliberate. Indeed, visitors come to the museum as knowing subjects, not *tabulae rasae*. They have shared interests, problems and hopes and can work collectively to achieve common understandings. This is what used to constitute the heart of radical adult education: offering citizens the space and pedagogical means to meet, talk and learn from each others' experiences. In an era when adult educators face the dominance of lifelong (l)earning (Edwards, 1999) at the expense of adult education, museums can become the spaces where more radical forms of education can still be pursued.

As this study showed, people who —for a variety of reasons— are currently excluded from museums, have a lot to contribute to imagining and experiencing a different kind of education in them. This will require not counting visitors, but instead making visitors count (Lumley, 1988): the balance of power in museum 'audiences' can only be shifted by redistributing the power of knowledge. Museum educators need to work 'in and against' the institutions that employ them, in order to establish a model of education that will foster critical thinking and the shared ownership of cultures and histories. This entails redistributing control of what counts as knowledge and education, as a matter of principle with the visitors themselves, rather than adjusting museum work to the market and government agendas, as a matter of course.

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Appendix I: Initial (sample) access letter to museums/ galleries

Mr ...
McManus Galleries
Albert Square
Dundee DD1 1DA

Friday, 19 November 2004

Re: Request for a meeting

Dear Mr...,

I am writing in order to request for a meeting with you, regarding the educational provision of the McManus Galleries. More specifically, the purpose of this meeting will be an initial discussion about the educational activities at your museum, and especially those that apply to adult visitors.

I have just finished the first year of my doctoral studies at the University of Edinburgh, researching on adult education in museums. My background includes postgraduate studies in Art History and Museum and Gallery studies, as well as four-year work experience as a museum education officer.

The main theme and aim of my PhD study is an analysis of adult education practice in museums and galleries; for the purposes of this research, this comprises both the outreach and in-house educational programmes specially targeted at adult visitors, as well as the wider notion of education through the use of collections and exhibitions. The main research questions being addressed regard the adult educational provision of museums and galleries and its take-up and impacts.

Having established the underpinning theoretical framework and core research questions, I am currently working on the fieldwork design – I hope to set the fieldwork in Dundee.

Therefore, I am asking if you could possibly spare an hour for a meeting, any time on Tuesday, 30.11.2004 or Wednesday, 1.12.2004 or between Friday, 10.12.2004 until Thursday, 16.12.2004, to enable me gain an initial insight into your educational activities and to discuss with you the prospect of including the McManus Galleries in my fieldwork research. My contact number is 077..... and e-mail address: Sotiria.Grek@.....

I am looking forward to hearing from you,

Best regards,

Sotiria Grek
PhD Student
Department of Higher and Community Education
University of Edinburgh

Appendix II: Access letter (sample) to community centres

To: (Project Co-ordinator)
Douglas Community Centre
Balmoral Avenue
Dundee
DD4 8SD

Thursday, 16 June 2005

Dear Mr/ Mrs....,

I am writing in order to inquire for the potential of including Douglas Community Centre in my fieldwork research, a doctoral research on the adult educational provision of museums and galleries in the city of Dundee. More particularly, I am interested in either individual adults or small groups of adults of all ages visiting museums and galleries in Dundee with me, in order to have a discussion about the exhibits.

My research plan is a multiple case study design in the adult educational provision of Dundee museums and galleries, looking at the McManus Galleries, Dundee Contemporary Arts, Verdant Works and Discovery Point. The fieldwork I am currently conducting comprises of interviewing both visitors and non-visitors of the above museum and gallery settings, using a method called 'accompanied visit'. It is a 'think aloud' method that gives visitors complete freedom over the gallery pathway they choose, the exhibits they decide to stop at, the language they use and the associations they make, in order to explore the way that visitors learn from the exhibitions, how they integrate them in their own personal worlds and how they place them in the wider reality.

Your support will be invaluable for the success of this study. Therefore, I would be grateful if you could possibly help me arrange such visits with members of the Douglas Community Centre, either individuals, or groups of 3-5 people. Since a lot of the people that have participated so far are over 60 years old, I would be interested in younger age groups, if that is possible. The visits will last for about an hour. It is also up to the individuals/ group to decide which museum they want to visit. All visits must be conducted until September but preferably between now and mid July; specific dates and times can be mutually arranged. Finally, at the conclusion of the study, I would be prepared to report to all the participants on findings pertinent to their interests. In this way, I hope my work would be of some value, and reciprocate your co-operation in the research project.

Finally, I would like to reassure you that participants' views will be used anonymously in this study, unless they prefer otherwise. This research fully complies with the research ethics guidelines provided by the British Educational Research Association and the Social Research Association.

Should there be any matters you wish to discuss regarding this e-mail, please feel free to contact me by e-mail (Sotiria.Grek@education.ed.ac.uk), post (28 Belsize Rd, Broughty Ferry, Dundee, DD5 1NF) or phone (07732 533347).

Thank you very much in advance.
Looking forward to your reply at your convenience,

Yours sincerely,
Sotiria Grek
PhD Student
Department of Higher and Community Education
University of Edinburgh

Appendix III: Community centres

Community Centre	Contact worker
1. Tayside Islamic and Cultural Education Centre (Jamia Masjid Tajdar-e-madina)	Mr Arshad
2. Bharatiya Ashram	Mr J.P.Hazra
3. Douglas Community Centre	Ms Jane Clark
4. Women in Black	Ms Fionn Stevenson
5. Highwayman Youth and Community Centre	Ms Tracie McMillan
6. Kirkton Community Support	Mr Steve Bentley
7. Mitchell Street Centre	Ms Marie Daily
8. Dundee International Women's Centre	Ms Pervin Ahmad
9. Turnaround Project	Mr Michael Shreenan
10. Whitfield Activity Complex	Mr Stan Bremner
11. Asian Action Group	Dr K.D. Saggar
12. Charleston Neighbourhood Centre	Ms Wosley
13. Finmill Centre	Ms Worseley
14. Grey Lodge	Ms Maria Buxey
15. Menzieshill Community Centre	Ms Eleanor Ballantyne
16. Hilltown Horizons	Mr Blair Denwette
17. Ardler Complex	Mr Scott Rodgers
18. The Clubhouse	Ms Joyce Guthrie
19. Corner	Mr Pete Glen
20. Young Adults Literacies Project	Ms Kirsty Gemmel Ms Sarah McEwan
21. Lochee Community Centre	Mr Ron Birrell
22. St John's Boomerang	Mr Neil Ellis

Appendix IV: Questionnaire (sample)

Date:

ID Number:

McManus Galleries- Visitors' questionnaire

The following questionnaire is absolutely confidential and anonymous. It will be used as part of a research project conducted by the University of Edinburgh. Hopefully it won't take you long at all to fill it in. Thank you in advance.

Q1: How often do you visit McManus Galleries? Please tick the appropriate box.

- ☐ This is my first visit ☐ I've visitedtimes in the last 12 months
☐ I've visitedtimes in the last 2 years ☐ I've visited but more than 2 years ago.

Q2: What is your postcode?

Q3: Are you male/ female? (Please delete as appropriate)

Q4: What age group do you belong to? ☐ under 21 ☐ 21-25 years ☐ 26-35 years
☐ 36-45 years ☐ 46-55 years ☐ 56-65 years
☐ 66-75 years ☐ over 75

Q4: What is or was your occupation? Please be as precise as possible

Q5: At what age did you finish your formal education (school, college or university)?

Q6: As regards ethnicity, do you describe yourself as: (Tick over the number)

White	British/Scot/English/ Welsh	01	Irish	02			Other/ Won't say	03
Asian/ Asian- British	Indian	04	Pakistani	05	Bangladeshi	06	Other/ Won't say	07
Black/ Black- British	Caribbean	08	African	09			Other/ Won't say	10
Mixed	White/Black Caribbean	11	White/ Black African	12	White/ Asian	13	Other mixed/ Won't say	14
Other	Chinese	15					All other/ Won't say	16

Please give any other comments you have overleaf.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR COOPERATION

Appendix V
Crosstabulations – Chi-square testing

Museum Name * age group crosstabulation

Count

		recoded age			Total
		0-35	36-65	66 plus	
Museum Name	McManus Galleries	64	219	17	300
	DCA	201	122	1	324
	DHT	45	215	32	292
Total		310	556	50	916

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	195.107(a)	4	.000
Likelihood Ratio	201.253	4	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	36.646	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	916		

a 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 15.94.

Museum Name * Gender crosstabulation

Count

		Gender		Total
		Male	Female	
Museum Name	McManus Galleries	143	157	300
	DCA	177	147	324
	DHT	133	157	290
Total		453	461	914

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.348(a)	2	.069
Likelihood Ratio	5.354	2	.069
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.099	1	.294
N of Valid Cases	914		

a 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 143.73.

Museum Name * Frequency of visit crosstabulation

Count

		how often 3		Total
		first visit	visited before	
Museum Name	McManus Galleries	91	209	300
	DCA	96	228	324
	DHT	232	60	292
Total		419	497	916

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	196.288(a)	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	204.596	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	182.964	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	916		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 133.57.

Museum Name * Education level crosstabulation

Count

		education3		Total
		basic edu	higher edu	
Museum Name	McManus Galleries	126	142	268
	DCA	22	253	275
	DHT	113	164	277
Total		261	559	820

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	110.709(a)	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	127.490	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	2.215	1	.137
N of Valid Cases	820		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 85.30.

Museum Name * postcode data crosstabulation

Count

		deprivation3			Total
		most affluent	middle-ground	most deprived	
Museum Name	McManus Galleries	74	74	89	237
	DCA	93	92	79	264
	DHT	71	44	38	153
Total		238	210	206	654

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	12.385(a)	4	.015
Likelihood Ratio	12.149	4	.016
Linear-by-Linear Association	10.204	1	.001
N of Valid Cases	654		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 48.19.

Museum Name * Occupational groups crosstabulation

Count

		recoded occupation				Total
		professionals	admin,sales	blue collar	students etc	
Museum Name	McManus Galleries	130	86	30	54	300
	DCA	168	37	5	114	324
	DHT	166	72	12	42	292
Total		464	195	47	210	916

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	85.822(a)	6	.000
Likelihood Ratio	86.891	6	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	12.763	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	916		

a. 0 cells (.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 14.98.